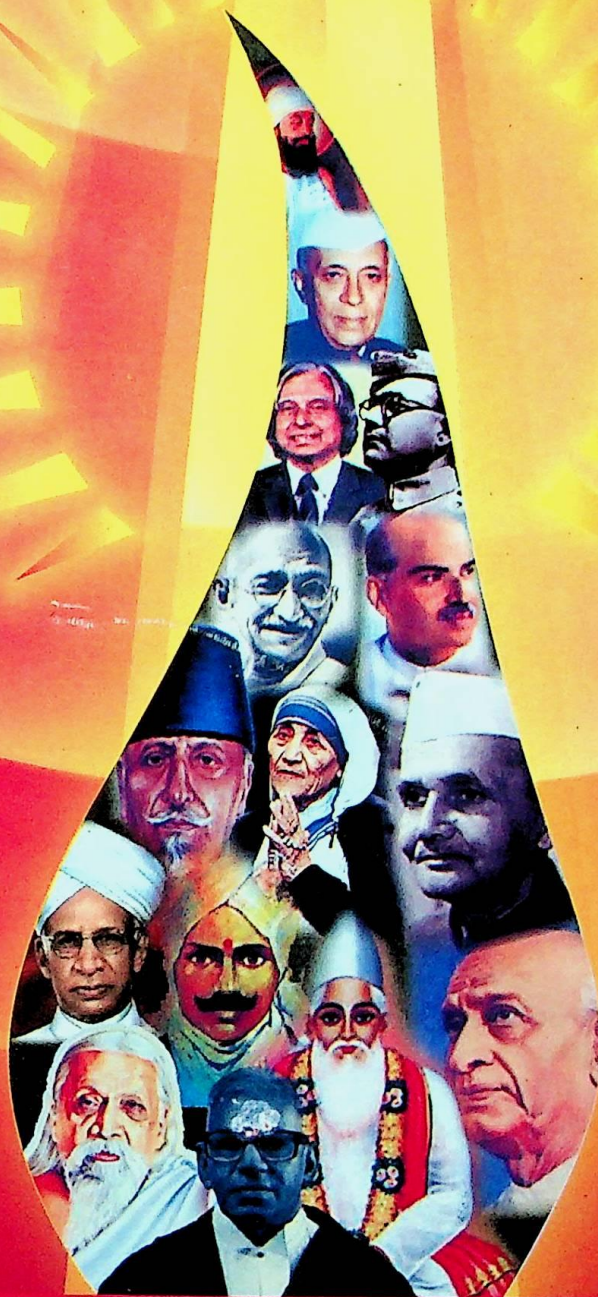


Light of Indian Intellect



Dr. L.M. Singhvi

In Sri Aurobindo's life was resurrected the vital essence of Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga and through him the spirit of yoga came alive and was given back to us as his legacy of love for the heritage of India.



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's place in the pantheon of India's freedom struggle is, by common consent, central and significant. By securing the integration of princely States within the Union of India, he became the principal architect of the new Indian State. He had 'no-nonsense' attitude to the issues before the nation. He was at once fair and firm, pragmatic and idealistic. His belief to liberal democratic principles was unswerving and unqualified.



Netaji Subhas Bose displayed tremendous energy and organizational skill in recruiting, training and financing the Indian National Army. He gave them the inspiring call of 'Jai Hind' and 'Dilli Chalo'. He was a doer as well as a thinker, and a fighter who never submitted to defeat.



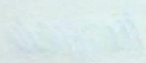
Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a national leader and statesman of exceptional calibre. He was a great patriot and an ardent votary, committed exponent and inspiring exemplar of the cause of India's National Unity and National Integration. He lived and died for that cause. His contribution to the making of India's Constitution of his understanding and the breadth of his national vision.



Dr. Kalam has the capacity to ignite a million more minds. What a mind! All his speeches are cerebral and inspiring. He worked hard, selflessly and for long hours, led an austere life in an opulent palace. Simplicity, patriotism, equanimity rectitude are the hallmarks of Dr. Kalam.

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Light of Indian Intellect

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Light of Indian Intellect

Dr. L.M. Singhvi



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Kamaladevi

Kamaladevi's death has removed from our midst an inspiring presence. She died full of years, honours, achievements, abiding human concerns, hopes, anxieties and disappointments. She was actively involved in numerous institutions, projects and ideas, literally until the last day of her life. Her life was saga of the triumph of her indomitable spirit. Homage to her memory is homage to the best in human kind's heritage of culture.

Kamaladevi was an activist and a humanist. Her deep human concerns led her inexorably into social activism and her activism made her a great catalyst and an institution-builder. Over the years that great crusader, pioneer and institution-builder became a unique and haloed figure, a living legend, indeed an institution by herself. She was an authentic personification of the austere culture of selfless striving, of concern and compassion, and of consecrated contribution to the quintessential quest of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, Satyam, Sivam, Sundram.

Raja Rao, the eminent author, described Kamaladevi as "perhaps the most august woman on the Indian scene today" and added, "Firmly Indian and, therefore, universal, highly sophisticated both in sensibility and intelligence, she walks with everyone, in city and country with utter simplicity." Her utter simplicity was matched by her deep compassion and humanity and these rare qualities found creative expression in versatile ventures dedicated to causes she made her own. No cause was too small for her attention; none was too large to make her feel helpless. A languishing craft, a forgotten art tradition, a neglected area or monument or tribe, a fellow human being in distress or difficulty, a consumer complaint, a prisoner's plight, an environmental issue, rights of women and children, human rights causes of individuals, and groups, were all within the range and reach of Kamaladevi's

indefatigable and energetic endeavours. In the beautifully knit tapestry of her life, all these diverse causes and varied endeavours belonged together. There was in her life and in her philosophy of life an unfragmented and unfractured integration and indivisibility of truth, beauty, goodness and justice, which were facets of each other.

Kamaladevi played an important part in founding and nurturing India International Centre. The Centre owes her an immeasurable debt, a debt we can never quite repay except perhaps by remembering and caring for her lifelong concerns institutionally. We cherish her intimate and active association with the Centre and gratefully acknowledge the tender and painstaking care she bestowed on the Centre as one of its founders, as a Life Trustee and as Vice-President for several years during the absence and illness of Dr. Deshmukh. She interacted with members continuously and planned, audited and attended many programmes. She knew almost every member of the staff personally. Face to face with problems, she was firm and clear, frank and forthright, fair and considerate, occasionally critical but always communicative. She synthesized in her approach freedom and discipline of a high order.

Many of the Centre's long-term concerns and programme patterns owe their origin and inspiration to her. Institution building and programme planning was second nature to her. She was an idealist but she was also exceptionally practical. She had a choreographic flair for details. She had patience and had an unyielding sense of purpose. Remembering Kamaladevi Deviki Jain aptly described her as "a central support for realistic idealism". She had an inexhaustible treasury of dreams and ideas but in that vast treasury, there were no cobwebs. For her, the past, the present and the future coalesced into a continuum. To her the past was precious but never deadweight or a sanctuary of escape. She saw in every programme with which she was associated at the Centre a microcosm of the great objectives for which the Centre was set up.

We share with Ram Chattopadhyaya his sense of personal loss and the sense of personal sorrow for she has bequeathed an enduring legacy of her dream's nation and a trust of many unfinished tasks to her friends and admirers. Those tasks are represented in small measures by the organization.

□

2

Rajiv Gandhi - A Statesman Martyr

Shri Rajiv Gandhi's tragic assassination took away a precious life and deprived India of his leadership at a critical time.

Rajiv Gandhi rose to the pinnacle of power, prestige and popularity in the aftermath of the martyrdom of his mother, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. He came reluctantly to politics, but once he entered, he threw himself in heart and soul, and brought a fresh breeze of honesty and forthrightness.

After his initial years in office as Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi encountered a lot rough weather but I always found him unruffled. I was sad to find that the later part of his term of office was dogged by controversies which sought to undermine his image as the leader of the world's largest democracy, but he remained to the end of his term of his office as Prime Minister, and later as President of his party, an urbane, courteous and well meaning statesman. I never found signs of rancour or bitterness in him against those who had been extremely hostile and antagonistic. Indeed, he remained the best known Indian leader and statesman both in India and abroad throughout the ebb and tide, and the turmoil and tribulation of Indian politics.

Rajiv Gandhi was a modern statesman. He contributed to the momentum of modernization and achieved a reconciliation of change with stability. He made a lasting contribution to environmental concerns, social justice perspectives, democratic decentralization, co-operative federalism, and diplomacy of peace and Third World solidarity. He represented the Commonwealth concerns against apartheid, racial discrimination and inequality. He also emerged as a world leader who stood for human rights, rule of law, economic liberalization, distributive justice, democracy and development.

Each time I met Rajiv Gandhi, I had the feeling of basking in the sunshine of human warmth, attentive receptivity to new ideas and the luminous glow

of youthful confidence and sincerity. I found him easy to converse with, ready to share ideas and to enter into the spirit of an idea. He was a man of great charm and unfailing courtesy; meeting him and talking to him was never an empty ritual. He was quick on the uptake and equally quick in respect of getting on with the business of implementing ideas to improve the system.

Rajiv Gandhi spoke on behalf of the Third World, which was his first world and foremost concern. Indeed, he was the authentic voice of the Third World. His concerns were no doubt global, and that is why his Third World advocacy was cast in a universal mould. He had an inborn sympathy with the cause of the downtrodden, the disadvantaged, the exploited and the impoverished. When he died, the size of our sorrow was proportioned to the cause of democracy and humanity upon which the terrorists of the world seem to have been declared a war during the last few years. Fortunately, for us in India, our grief did not deprive us of our courage, our sorrow did not denude us of our resolve, and our shock and trauma did not drive us into the neglect and oblivion of the values for which Rajiv Gandhi lived and died. That was indeed a true homage to Rajiv Gandhi, who died a martyr's death. His luminous legacy lives on and continues to serve the cause of democracy and development in India, the cause of ushering to serve the cause of India, the cause of the peoples of the world living as one family on the Planet Earth, caring and sharing together in a common striving for a new world order.

When Rajiv Gandhi died, he was on the threshold of a new phase in his career. His accession to the prime ministerial office in 1991 would have been the resurrection of a dream. That dream did not die with him. In his martyrdom, he made the Indian nation an heir to that dream.

A Sonnet in Memoriam

Upon soaring expectations on a sunlit summit,
 Came searing lava and the earthquake,
 The flower of hope wilted in the ashes,
 In the season of spring, a void and a Heartache.
 Dazed in the maze of public sorrow,
 Lost in pensive private grief,
 We saw avarice in the eyes of cruel Fate,
 In our sylvan home the trespass of the lurking thief;
 That thief put paid to a glorious and lovely dream,
 Phoenix-like, it will rise from the ashes, and that dream we shall redeem.
 Planet Earth he loved and was loved in turn,
 In the arms of Mother Earth we saw him return,
 Smiling visage, his astral body without scar or burn,
 His ashes in cosmic communion in the orb and the urn.

Amaan Ali Bangash: The Rising Maestro

Born in July 1977, Amaan Ali Bangash is the disciplined elder son of Sarod Maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and the grandson of late Aftaabe Sarod Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan Saheb. He has taken up to the music seriously in order to maintain the family's musical heritage. Amaan Ali Bangash started giving public performances from the tender age of eight.

He has accompanied his father to various music festivals in India and abroad. Following are some of his important performances including his solos, duets and trios:

1. Visited Russia at the age of 10 in 1987 and performed for the Festival of India;
2. Participated in the first ever Festival of Sarod at the age of 10 held in Delhi under the auspices of Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan Memorial Society;
3. Sarod recital in honour of the former President of India, Shri R. Venkataraman in 1990;
4. Series of concerts organized by the prestigious organization known as 'The Asia Society' at New York USA in 1991;
5. Accompanied his father on a concert tour to Trinidad (West Indies) in May 1992, Singapore in July 1992;
6. His first major solo performance in 'Vishnu Digambar Jayanti' held in Delhi in August 1993 has claimed laurels in the press and public;
7. The following year (1994) Amaan along with his younger brother accompanied his father Ustad Amjad Ali Khan in prestigious RPC Festival organized for Rajiv Gandhi Foundation;

8. Series of concerts in different parts of South Africa in 1994;
9. In June 1995, accompanied his father, to a very special concert for His Royal Highness Prince Charles at his private residence in Highgrove Buckingham Shire. The first ever concert of Indian music to be held at a Royal residence;
10. Same year, special concert at Nehru Centre, London brought high acclaims from audience and press;
11. Italy in July 1995 and Scandinavian countries in October 1995;
12. In 1996, he accompanied his father on a concert tour to USA, which was highly successful.
13. He has also started giving solo performance in most of the prestigious music festivals held in the country and has been accompanied by senior tabla accompanists.
14. Recently, Amaan has been awarded the 'ARTISTES OF THE YEAR AWARD' 1996 by Soorya Organization in Trivendrum.
15. On 6 January 1997, Amaan with his younger brother Ayaan gave an inaugural concert on the Silver Jubilee Celebration of Delhi's one of the most prestigious 'Kamani Auditorium'.
16. On 1 March 1997, Amaan gave a splendid performance at Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta.

Besides TV concerts and performances in different places, Amaan has also represented his school for many national and international school music competitions bringing laurels to his school from where he has completed his finals in 1995. He has also been receiving vocal and tabla training.

In an effort to keep alive the family tradition, Amaan has undertaken the responsibility of intensive training from his father. Though yet only 19 his deep involvement with all sorts of Indian classical music offers promise for a bright future ahead.

His mother Subhalakshmi Khan also has an immense contribution in his life as she gave up performing on stage at the peak of her career for the family.

□

The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom in the year 1675 is a landmark event etched in the memory of India. Guru Tegh Bahadur was inclined to renunciation by personal temperament. He was truly a *Tyagi*, a man who was selfless, compassionate and giving. When he succeeded Guru Hari Krishen, who was, in fact, his grand nephew, his retiring disposition and his reluctance to assert his rights won him the acclaim of the masses. Hired assassins made attempts on his life, but destiny had assigned him the role of a great martyr for a great cause. It was Guru Tegh Bahadur, who bought a hillock near the village of Makhawal and founded a village away from the maddening disputes rose by some of his relations, and later named it Anandpur, the Haven of Bliss. He travelled everywhere in India and was acknowledged by the people as a great leader of the people and their rights. He travelled to not only Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Varanasi, Gaya and Patna but went far beyond Brahmaputra, to Sylhet and Chittagong. It was in Dhaka that he came to know of the birth of his son in Patna. When he returned to Punjab, he already had a large and devoted following. He became the authentic voice of the unity of the Indian people against religious fanaticism, discrimination and persecution.

Sikh historian Khushwant Singh is of the opinion that "Guru Tegh Bahadur was sentenced to death and executed in pursuance of Aurangzeb's policy of persecution of the non-Muslims" and that "the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, who was looked upon as the leader of the Hindus, had Aurangzeb's tacit approval." His companions in his martyrdom were Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Dyal Das. Their devotion to Guru Tegh Bahadur and the cause he symbolized was complete. After these three noble disciples were brutally tortured and executed, the Kazi decreed that Guru Tegh Bahadur would be executed in Chandni Chowk. The date of that martyrdom is often

given as 11 November 1675 in many books of history but Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is officially observed on 11 December. According to contemporaneous sources Aurangzeb and his minions were alarmed by the popularity of Guru Tegh Bahadur and his resolute opposition to Aurangzeb's religious fanaticism and intolerance. According to a popular legend, several Kashmiri Pandits approached Guru Tegh Bahadur with heartrending tales of atrocities and excesses perpetrated upon them by Aurangzeb's officers in the name of religion. Hearing the story of the sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits, Guru Tegh Bahadur told them that they should tell Aurangzeb and his officers that if he could convince the Guru about the need to accept conversion to Islam they would also follow suit. Without going into the historicity of this episode, it is clear that the cruel fate to which Tegh Bahadur was subjected by the mighty Mughul Empire in the arrogance of fanaticism was the direct consequence of Guru Tegh Bahadur's uncompromising advocacy of the cause of religious freedom, religious tolerance, peace and humanity. It is well to remember that it was in a spirit of devotion, universal brotherhood and the spiritual unity of all human beings that Guru Tegh Bahadur preached the Sangat at his last congregational prayer and told them that he was going to Delhi. He knew very well that his life was in grave danger, but he was undaunted and undeterred. He decided to make the Supreme Sacrifice if the need arose, and covered him with the halo of divine glory. Indeed, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur became India's new seed of composite culture based on a sense of religious freedom. Truly has it been said that it is martyrs who create faith, and it is the cause, not the death, that makes the martyr. The cause that immortalized the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur was the cause of religious freedom and tolerance as well as the cause of indissoluble bonds of Hindu-Sikh unity and amity.

We do not know whether Guru Tegh Bahadur and his three disciples were executed on the direct orders of Emperor Aurangzeb because it is historically established that the Emperor was not in Delhi at the relevant time. It is possible that it was the Chief Kazi and the local officers of the Mughul Emperor who acted either at the behest of the Emperor or on their own in general accord with the policy of the Emperor. What is of everlasting significance is that Guru Tegh Bahadur died a great martyr. The Sisganj Gurudwara in Delhi stands as a reminder to the noble vision of that great poet, statesman, saint and teacher. He gave his life in the cause of freedom and liberty of faith and worship. He died in the cause of the rights of the oppressed against the arrogant and arbitrary powers of the state. He died in the cause of Indian unity and the unity of human kind. He died in the cause

of human dignity. As his great son Guru Gobind Singh said, 'Guru Tegh Bahadur performed the supreme sacrifice with his martyrdom in a dark age.' Indeed, he died so that we may hold our heads high. His legacy to India and mankind was: *Sis Diya Par Sarr Na Diya*, 'I gave my head but not my dignity and self respect'. His luminous legacy continues to shine in the Constitution of India, which is consecrated to the cause of Justice, Freedom, Liberty, Equality, National Unity and Integrity, Human Dignity, and the Fraternity of the Indian Nation. These are concepts, which have been nourished by the noble thoughts and the selfless sacrifice of martyrs like Guru Tegh Bahadur and Mahatma Gandhi.



5

A Tribute to the Great Philanthropist Shri G.D. Birla

The late Shri G.D. Birla came to personify the true meaning of his family name, which means 'rare' and 'exceptional' in Hindi language. He was a living legend in his lifetime. Indeed, he lives beyond his death.

It has been said, "God gave us memory so that we may have Roses in December." Our memory of the life and work of G.D. is green and fragrant and is filled with roses of warm and colourful recollections of that rare and exceptional human being who bestrode the Indian scene as a magnificent colossus of our time.

A poet has said:

Thou Shalt ever joy at eventide
If thou spend the day fruitfully.

Shri G.D. Birla's days were spent fruitfully and meaningfully. God had vested in him the choicest human qualities and made him a chosen instrument of divine will. In the music of cosmic song, G.D.'s life was lived as an offering of a living and vibrant lyrical refrain. Thanks to the exemplary devotion and the tender care of the members of his family, and the universal public esteem and admiration he enjoyed, the evening of his life was spent in the tranquil joy of contentment and contemplation.

G.D. died full of years but we count not the years in his life but the life in his years. And what a many-splendoured life it was! His life was a veritable saga of enterprise and achievement, of goodness and good deeds spread over a long span of time. He was always his age and he felt glorious. What was fabulous about him was that he was invariably himself, towering above his affluence and his influence, and glowing above the glitter of success and fame. And the key to all this was that he refused to be possessed by his

possessions. Wealth in his family accumulated but the human being in him did not decay or diminish. He knew how to give and to enjoy giving. The mantra of his life was 'Tena Tyaketen Bhunjithah', as the Upanishads have taught us.

Money is often a daydream for the poor and a nightmare for the rich. G.D. had dreams without being poor and he was rich without having any nightmares. His dreams were not those of money and wealth though he used wealth to fulfil his dreams. He was rich because he had a phenomenal capacity to create wealth and to give it for good causes. He was rich not merely because of his material possessions but because there was coherence and meaning in his life. Wealth was his servant, never his master. He had a settled habit of doing good and feeling good about it. There was in him an innate goodness born of wisdom; samskara born of sadhna; habit of virtue born of discipline.

G.D. was a celebrity and celebrities are hard to communicate and converse. He was an exception. I found him a gracious and thoughtful host, and easy, stimulating and instructive to converse with. The range of his repertoire was very wide indeed. He had broad sympathies. He was known as a pre-eminent entrepreneur and a wizard of sound management. He was all that, but he was a great deal more.

G.D. was a great patriot and a great statesman. His intimate association with Mahatma Gandhi and the whole galaxy of India's great freedom fighters is well-known but it is not equally well-known that he was also a valuable bridge of communication and goodwill between the British Raj and the great leaders of the people of India. He played a historic role in Indo-British negotiations, with undiminished trust and respect from both sides in that difficult role. He came under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi and was close to him, but he was capable of an independent expression of his own ideas even before Gandhiji. G.D. participated in preparing India's blueprint for planning. He was respected by the Government and the Industry alike. To my mind, he represented quintessentially the fruitful partnership of the past, the present and the future. He was at once rooted in the past heritage and yet he was too rational and modern to be in its bondage. He was knowledgeable but what is fundamental, he was endowed with an ample measure of that scarce commodity, common sense, which is almost as rare as genius. He was gifted with a true and intrinsic understanding, which opens the doors to emancipation. He was a votary of true knowledge which comes from independence of mind and fearlessness of spirit and which is defined thus by our ancient seers: Sa Vidya va Vimuktaye.

In him, there was a ceaseless quest. G.D. was a tireless seeker of truth

and the romance of his life was to understand reality. He was not for mere authority of the scriptures or the ponderous pedantry of compulsive precedent. He had remarkable originality and he had the moral courage to tackle the truth for himself. He was fearless and had a very high sense of detachment, objectivity, candour and humility. He was a religious man in a profoundly ethical, humane and spiritual sense. His humanitarian outlook and his commitment to work as a form of worship were dimensions of his ethics and spiritualism.

G.D. practised the integral yoga of harmonising through speech and' action. That is why his interest in music, temples, industrial enterprises and the amelioration of the conditions of the poor were all of one piece. For the poor, he had genuine compassion, but he would help them to help themselves. To help to improve the human condition was a part of his fundamental faith and he could say with the poet:

I thought instead of talking
About the Life to come and Justice Beyond,
Perhaps I could do a little to ameliorate
Their condition on this Earth.

There is an old saying that the house itself praises the architect. What he built and how he built it all is itself an acclaim of encomium. The House of Birlas, the edifice of dynamism and sound management, the Birla Mandirs, the Birla Schools, the Birla Awards, the Birla Institutes of Culture, the Institutes of technology and innumerable educational and charitable institutions throughout India constitute an evocative and eloquent testimony of the vision of that great architect of modern India. However, his outlook was not confined to India alone. He loved the best in humanity's heritage and was a world citizen. Perhaps, that is why he wanted to be cremated wherever and in whatever country he died. He lived and practised the precept of the Oneness of the world and the human family. His handsome and inspiring lifelike statue in London sums up the essence of the noble saga of the glorious life of that great world citizen.

□

Will of Mahatma Gandhi

There are those who hold the view that India should not bother to bid for the editorial note Mahatma Gandhi wrote 19 days before his tragic assassination. There are many, however, who regard it as a part of our precious legacy. Whether India should bid for the Gandhiji's draft editorial for 'Harijan' may be a question, which is open to be debate. Those of us, who regard it as a part of India's precious heritage, however, feel that we must get back the document.

Gandhiji's papers are generally the property of Navjeevan Trust according to the duly probated Will of Mahatma Gandhi certified copies of which might have gathered by now excessive dust in the archives of India's High Commission in London where I left them when I remitted office.

It was based on Gandhiji's Will and its Probate that we succeeded in preventing the auction of a large collection of Gandhi papers by Phillips, a highly specialized and reputed vintage British company. In the event, we were able to force them to surrender the papers to us. Those papers valued at several million dollars are now safely lodged in Nehru Memorial Museum. In addition, be it noted, they were brought to India at no cost to the exchequer because the auction house and Swami Sivaya of Hawaii Temple who entrusted the papers to it for auction had no title to what they were about to auction. V. Kalyanam, a typist working with Gandhiji, had simply walked away with a suitcase full of Gandhi letters and papers in manuscript after Gandhiji was assassinated. Kalyanam gave those immensely valuable papers to Swami Sivaya, a Shaivite sanyasi of American origin. We do not know the details of the deal they made. That collection contains many invaluable letters of Gandhiji.

I took the view that this was stolen property and Kalyanam could not pass title in the property he had stolen. I hold the same view about the editorial

note of 11th January by Gandhiji. Faced with the impending auction of a large collection of Gandhiji's papers, I was forced to track the will of Mahatma Gandhi and its Probate. I then caused a case to be filed against Kalyanam in Chennai. Thanks to my friend, N. Ram of The Hindu, we did track down Kalyanam who was, however adamant and unyielding. We also caused a notice to be served on the auction house to cancel the auction and not to remove the property from the jurisdiction of London Courts. In view of Kalyanam's admissions and his declaration of intent to keep doing what he has been doing, the Government ought to take criminal proceedings against him and track and seize all Gandhi document wherever he might have secreted them.

The Guardian published a special supplement on the Indian claim. The British' MPs and the media supported the Indian High Commission. The fear of law and the fear of God (in that order) finally brought the auction house to heel. They asked for a meeting with me in the High Commission. They came with a battery of their lawyers and Directors. I was my own lawyer except that I had my friend, the senior retired Law Lord, The Lord Templeman, sitting by my side. His presence by my side visibly shook them up, awed and demoralized them. The auction house wanted to avoid a suit for heavy damages and injunction by me. They were at pains to explain that they had made the deal in good faith but had made an honest error in law. We settled it all amicably between us but the hitch was that the papers were entrusted to the auction house by Swami Sivaya who had also to agree. I wrote to him that he should consent to the settlement because a Hindu temple ought never, to be built on the immoral foundation of stolen property. I also told the good Swami that he had unwittingly become a party to the theft and fraud perpetrated by V. Kalyanam. Swami's sincere contrition and repentance moved me deeply. Finally, all the papers with a valuable book of annotations prepared by the auction house came to us free of any cost. Indeed the auction house paid a token notional cost to us. I had the honour to present the precious papers to the nation through the then President of India.

In the impending auction of Mahatma Gandhi's editorial note of January 11, the question of title is crucial. Otherwise, we would be buying our own property, property, which belongs to Harijan or Navjeevan Trust. How the letter came into the possession of the private Swiss collector and on what basis he or she claims title is a mystery that remains to be unraveled. My caveat to other potential foreign buyers is caveat emptor for they may be buying stolen property without any title and India will be able to chase it in their hands.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

It was a foregone conclusion that APJ Abdul Kalam would not be a candidate in the current presidential election for he knew his arithmetic for sure. It is as well that he finally decided to decline the invitation to seek another presidential term.

President Kalam is to complete his term in the midst of a countrywide accolade of affection for his intellectual calibre and warm human qualities. A glorious presidential term will soon be behind him.

A peoples' president is, how long he will be remembered. With no personal axes to grind, he has in the august office and edifice of Presidency with great distinction. He came to that office with no experience of political and constitutional intricacies and made no more than one untoward and innocent mistake. Innocence and humility are what mark the man whose warm heart and brilliant mind have carved a niche for him in the hearts of the people. As the republic prepared to say farewell to President Kalam, about to demit office, the people and the nation in the civil society eagerly waited to embrace a man whose intellect and human qualities qualified him for a citizen's role bigger than that of the President of the Establishment. Citizen Kalam in a bungalow in Lutyen's Delhi would, I was sure, prove to be many notches taller than President Kalam in Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Four great presidents of India (Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Shri R. Venkatraman), one of them is happily with us (about to reach his hundredth year) have left a great constitutional legacy, but Kalam's forte was quite a different one. The level of his outreach too was different. The point is that he always chose to be himself, like the red collar button in his Jodhpur jacket.

Catapulted into the great office by a sudden configuration, he has had

a mind and heart of his own. If he acquiesced in being woken up rudely at the midnight to sign a presidential proclamation regarding Bihar faxed to him (an obvious lapse), he was also able to say no to the Office of Profit Bill and give his own cogent reasons for exercising his presidential prerogative. He has the charming humility not to claim any infallibility. He has an open and creative mind, which has the capacity to ignite a million more minds. What a mind! All his speeches are cerebral and inspiring. There is not one speech that he made, as a mere ceremonial verbosity. There was always weight and substance in what he said. His website is a treasure house of his extraordinary versatility. His speeches were always bubbling with ideas and innovations. Though he occasionally caused discomfiture to the staid and the conventional, it was a part of being Kalam, for whom the presidential office was never a sinecure or a prison house. He worked hard, selflessly and for long hours, led an austere life in an opulent palace. Whenever I went to visit him, I found him working at his computer. Simplicity, patriotism, equanimity rectitude were the hallmarks of President Kalam.

What does a President do when he retires? Kalam is energetic and in good health. I see for him the role of the nation's conscience and the civil society's voice. He tells me he will teach and write. That he must. However, his voice should always be heard above the din of the distorted discourse of plotting and scheming politicians in our public life. His spiritual and moral energies should be harnessed in awakening India and realizing its spiritual, cultural, economic and social aspirations. The nation needs the sanity and equanimity of Kalam, the austere and ascetic citizen.

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Dr. Balram Jakhar

Dr. Balram Jakhar shines in the firmament of Indian public life and represents a noble and reassuring presence beyond party divides.

Dr. Balram Jakhar's appearance on the national scene was marked exceptionally by his election to Parliament and elevation to the high office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. He had the distinction of virtually beginning his parliamentary career by occupying the office of the Speaker during his maiden term as a Member of Lok Sabha. It is noteworthy that most Speakers have had long parliamentary innings before they were elevated to the high office.

Dr. Balram Jakhar was truly an exceptional speaker in many ways. He was elected unanimously to preside over two successive Houses of the People for full terms. Dr. Jakhar brought to bear on the office of the Speaker, his native and characteristic charm and down-to-earth commonsense. Those were relatively tranquil times. There were fewer episodes of pandemonium in Parliament. The well of the House was not frequently stormed by angry and recalcitrant members. Dr. Jakhar presided over the House with greet dignity and was able to maintain the highest standards of decorum. He had no previous experiences as Speaker but he conducted himself in that office as if to the manner born.

Born in Panjkoshi Village in the Ferozpur district of the former state of Punjab, Dr. Jakhar has been a true son of the soil rooted in the culture and heritage of India. He graduated from the Foreman Christaian College in Lahore with Honours in Sanskrit. As a linguist and a polyglot, he is at home in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Sanskrit and English. He is a man of culture; at heart he remains an agriculturalist, a scion of the robust Aryan Tradition. A progressive farmer, he was also a progressive politician. Honoured as an 'Udyan Pandit' by the President of India in 1975, he arrived in Delhi to tend and mind a new orchard, the Indian Parliament. He proved to be superb gardener of that orchard. The two honorary

degrees of Vidyamartand, and Doctor of Science honour are sufficient to describe the man both culturally and agriculturally.

It was in the year 1980 when he was elected to the 7th Lok Sabha from his home constituency. As Speaker of the Lok Sabha, he will long be remembered as a prudent and positive Presiding Officer, personifying dignity and exuding quiet confidence. His success as the Speaker was, to many a welcome and marvellous surprise, for he had no previous experience of the complexities of politics and procedures in the Lok Sabha. His cultural sensitivity, his openness and transparency, his readiness and capacity to understand the diverse points of views of many carve out a sense of unity in diversity. Having served in the Third Lok Sabha, I would frequently visit the Seventh and Eight Lok Sabhas and watch him in the Speaker's Chair from the galleries. I could see how he was equipped with a barometer connected to the mood of the House and how he could draw out positive responses from negative mindsets and critical proclivities. He had a rare capacity to carry the House with him. His was the Indian farmer's hallmark of leadership qualities. It was in evolving consensus that Dr. Jakhar proved his mettle and his hallmark quality.

It was during Speaker Jakhar's term of Office that many significant reforms in the rules and procedures were carried out and important legislative institutional changes were devised and designed. It was during his time that the anti-defection Law was enacted and provision was made for disqualification of members on grounds of defection. The most notable proposal for Parliamentary reforms during his time came in the form of the system of full-fledged departmentally related Standing Committee system which was introduced during the life of the 10th Lok Sabha but it was essentially offshoot of the earlier Subjects Committee System mooted by Speaker Jakhar in 1989. This I think was the most far-reaching reform, which helped to streamline the Indian Parliamentary System and make it more efficient.

Equally notable and significant was Speaker Jakhar's contribution in building strong bridges between the Indian Parliament, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding officers as well as Inter-Parliamentary Union. Speaker Jakhar was the first Asian to be elected to the Executive Committee of CPA. He was also elected a member of the Executive Committee of IPU. Later when I was India's High Commissioner in London, distinguished members of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and those of the British Parliament often fondly recalled their association with Dr. Jakhar with affection and admiration. To be so fondly remembered in a foreign country at a considerable distance of time is proof positive of the enduring impact of Dr. Jakhar's presence

on the international scene.

Dr. Balram Jakhar answers in a full measure, except in respect of one particularly aspect, the model image of the Speaker which was conjured up by the Speaker Elect Yelverton in the year 1597 and quoted by my good friend the late Viscount Tony Pandy. Speaker elect Yelverton had said as far back as 1597, "Your Speaker ought to be a man big and comely, stately and well-spoken; his voice great, his carriage majestic, his nature haughty and his purse plentiful." Dr. Jakhar is certainly a man big and comely, stately and well spoken, his voice great, his carriage majestic and dignified, but his nature is far from being haughty. He is, by common consent, warm, humane, generous and accommodating. In public life, his presence has been that of a flawless diamond radiating the good qualities of a large-hearted Indian rooted in the Indian soil of culture and heritage. To him we owe an especially warm tribute for his distinguished public service particularly when we know that public office is seldom a bed of roses. He has embellished and enhanced every public office he has occupied, and as Speaker, Minister and Governor, he has proved himself in those offices to be a man of substance, humility and understanding. Indeed, he is a man built in the perfect proportions of the qualities of head and heart.

When the Constitution was being made, my mentor Dr. K.M. Munshi would occasionally take me to the Parliament House, which also housed the Federal Court and the Supreme Court until the new building of the Supreme Court was inaugurated. When I returned after an overseas sojourn of many years Dr. Munshi prompted and guided me to seek election to the Third Lok Sabha as an Independent candidate. My election to the Third Lok Sabha gave my life a new direction and dimension. It was during that period that I founded the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies and delved deep into the Parliamentary Institutions and procedures, their rationale and evolution as well as contextual relevance in India.

I have had the privilege of seeing successive Speakers of the Lok Sabha from Shri G.V. Mavalankar to Shri Somnath Chatterjee and have seen each one of them shed luster on that august office. Each one of them has had some outstanding qualities for the high office they occupied. Dr. Balram Jakhar is a diamond bright presence in that galaxy.

To Dr. Jakhar's innate sense of proportion and balance, we owe a special tribute in our troubled times when as a cynic put it, "the power to do harm is often regarded as laudable and the power to do good is sometimes accounted dangerous". Dr. Jakhar is an exemplar of good intentions (Sadbhavana), Shubh-Kamana (Goodwill) and Sukrit (Good and Noble deeds).

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Contribution of Mr. Benegal Shiva Rao in Making India's Constitution

The making of the Indian Constitution by the Constituent Assembly of India between 9 December 1946, and 26 November 1949 was by far the most massive and ambitious enterprise in the worldwide history of Constitution-making. The long and arduous labours of the Indian Constituent Assembly yielded not merely a lengthy and elaborate constitutional document but a renewed declaration of the liberal faith embodying certain universal values and concepts and representing a new synthesis and equipoise in the outlook of man at the cross-roads of the mid-twentieth century. In the momentous deliberations of the Constituent Assembly and its many Committees, we find a generous measure of the creative dialectics of self-government interspersed with pragmatic insights, patriotic ideals, and differences of opinion, conflicts of interests and the give and take of constructive compromise. Here was a body of men assembled in free debate, imbued with the ideas of nationalism and new international humanism, impelled by their dreams of socio-economic reconstruction of their Motherland and called upon to lay down the fundamentals of the organic law for the governance of their country.

The task confided to the 296 member of India's Constituent Assembly was a historic assignment, unique and unprecedented in the political history of India. The five volumes on *The Framing of India's Constitution*, edited by Mr. Benegal Shiva Rao tell the exciting story of Constitution making in India through documents and through a systematic narrative. The release of the volumes last year by the President of India on the day on which the Constitution was adopted by Constituent Assembly, the 26 November was a major event in the field of Indian Constitutional Scholarship. There is no

doubt that these volumes will greatly enrich the study of the travaux préparatoire, the preparatory work of the Constituent Assembly and will illumine our understanding of the provisions of the Constitution in the context, in which they were conceived. It is true that 'a completed constitutional document is not altogether controlled by the original intendment of its authors. A Constitution as a living instrument acquires a personality of its own. On the other hand, the inexorable power of the written text is equally undeniable. The process of the framing of Constitution is instructive not merely for the historian but for constitutional jurists, practical statesmen, political scientists and practicing lawyers alike. Indeed a time may come when even the judiciary would be able to overcome its traditional hesitancy in resorting to the preparatory work of the Constituent Assembly and its committees for purposes of interpreting the provisions of the Constitution. A detailed study of the Constitution is, therefore, not a form of making of ancestor-worship or a lapse into wistful academic atavism; it provides a sound and a solid base for the study of the Constitution.

Mr. Shiva Rao's five volumes run into more than 4000 pages and four of these volumes contain select documents on Constitution-making in India, while the fifth volume seeks to narrate the evolution of the provisions of the Constitution through various stages until their final adoption by the Constituent Assembly on 26 Number 1949. The narrative serves the purpose of simple and lucid annotation, without straying too far into juristic analysis or political motivations and implications, tasks that are best left to be attempted more fully by statesmen who participated in the process or more independently by scholars and specialists as separate, self-contained undertakings. The narrative lacks the vibrant liveliness which for example Dr. K.M. Munshi's work on the Constitution 'Pilgrimage to Freedom' possesses in such an unusual measure, but it provides a detached and coherent framework for a clear understanding of the main aspects of the evolution and the emergence of the various provisions of the Constitution. It is, however, to the four volumes of select documents that we must turn for the fascinating panorama of Constitution making at work. It is these notes and memoranda and proceeding, some of them raw and rough-hewn and even uncorrected, that re-enact for the reader that memorable chapter in India's book of self-government under the inspiration of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. This Bill of 1895 contemplated a Parliament, which was defined as an assembly of representatives – officials as well as non-official – of the Indian Nation. It sought to define Indian citizenship and the territories of India, which were to include the princely States also. The Constitution made Parliament of India the supreme repository of all power,

which was stated to be delegated by and derived from the Indian Nation. This Constitution guaranteed civil rights, the right to take part in the affairs of the country, the right to bear arms, the freedom of expression, the right to property, the right to equality before law, the right to employment and the right to petition and to complain to the authorities. The Constitutional Bill provided for Free State education and for compulsory primary education. It is remarkable that this draft Constitution of 1895 provided for universal and equal adult suffrage for all Indian citizens.

The volume covers the entire gamut of political thinking and proposals for constitutional reforms until the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly on 9 December 1946. The volume also contains materials on the rules of procedure and Standing Order for regulating the business of the Constituent Assembly on the adoption of the national flag and the statements relating to the transfer of power. Part 9 of the first volume throws considerable light on the negotiation with and the entry of Indian princely States into the constitutional framework of India. The second volume relates to the settlement of major principles regarding fundamental rights, minorities, federalism, distribution of powers and citizenship.

We find here a scintillating variety of viewpoints and their vigorous articulation. The preliminary note of fundamental rights prepared by Sir Benegal Narsing Rao and another note on the subject by Mr. K.T. Shah make interesting reading and show that the authors of these notes were familiar with trends in political theory and jurisprudence in different parts of the world. Sir Benegal commented at length on the development and the jurisprudence of fundamental rights in the United States, Switzerland, Ireland and Austria. Sir Benegal pointed out in his note that it would be useful to recognize a distinction between two broad classes of rights: there are certain rights which require positive action by the State and which can be guaranteed only so far as such action is practicable, while others merely require that the State shall abstain from prejudicial action. He illustrated his point by reference to the right to work, which cannot be guaranteed further than by requiring the State, in the language of the Irish Constitution, "to direct its policy towards securing that the citizens may through their occupations, find the means of making reasonable provision for their domestic needs". On the other hand, Sir Benegal referred to the American due process clause, which operated as an injunction on State action for the preservation of individual liberty.

Sir Benegal borrowed the distinction between justifiable fundamental rights and the non-justifiable directive fundamental rights and the non-justifiable directive principle of social policy from the Irish Constitution and suggested

that these should be set forth in two different chapters. The deliberations in the committees and the notes, memoranda and reports included in this volume throw a flood of light on the kaleidoscope of competing demands, which clamoured for their recognition at the hands of the founding fathers of our Constitutions. These proceedings also show the resilience of different viewpoints and the spirit of friendly accommodation and reasonable compromise. The third and fourth volumes contain various drafts of the Constitution, the minutes, proceedings and reports of the Drafting Committee and the various notes and comments placed before the Drafting Committee. The fourth volumes contain further notes and papers leading to the final revision of the Constitution.

Particularly interesting items in the fourth volumes are the carefully compiled notes and suggestions on the Draft Constitution emanating from a wide range of individuals and institutions and representing a variegated spectrum of opinion. These documents also show that the Constitution of India is not a mere adaption and rehash of the Government of India Act, 1935 and that there went into the making of the Indian Constitution a variety of pulls and pressures, a diversity of viewpoints and patients preserving and purposeful scholarship, astute, juristic, analysis, historical perception.

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Babu Jagjivan Ram: A Panoramic Procession of Events

Babu Jagjivan Ram is a rare phenomenon in Indian public life. His life is a saga of public service. He is himself a living legend. He is a symbol of India's commitment to the ideals of social, economic and political justice. In a sense, he personifies the implicit pledge of our Constitution to establish a society free of discrimination, disability and deprivation. Babu Jagjivan Ram is, however, a national leader in every sense of the word. His popularity is not confined merely to the Scheduled Castes who adore him; he commands equally the respect and affection of the average Indian who knows him as a very dedicated freedom fighter, able administrator, a dynamic organizer, a wise counsellor, an ardent devotee of national integration and kind of a talisman who invariably brings good luck and good fortune.

Babu Jagjivan Ram is gifted with an imperturbable equanimity. He has had his share, perhaps more than his share, of the pain and provocations caused by social effrontery.

For him, the road to the summit of national leadership has been strewn with thorns and hazards of all descriptions. He has felt and experienced with an aching heart and an agonized sensitivity the humiliations and the sufferings of the millions of our countryman with whom he has identified himself. However, he did not opt for the angry invective of disruption and disintegration. He chose to hold aloft the banner of peaceful social revolution by persuasion and consent and by appealing to the conscience of the community as a whole. Steeped in the quintessence of Indian culture and its ageless message, Babu Jagjivan Ram followed in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and has carved a niche for himself in the hearts of the common people of India. In the history of modern India, he has played a notable role in the

socialization of the socially disabled, in the uplift of the underprivileged and in the amelioration of the downtrodden, and in maintaining and fostering a sense of unity and common commitment to the task of nation building. He has consistently refused to repudiate the rich and rational heritage of India's saints and savants; he has reinforced our joy and pride in belonging to awaken and arouse the social and religious conscience of India and has helped to purify and replenish the inner resources of India's heritage. His understanding and his love of the best in Indian culture is conducive to a measure of catalysis and degree of catharsis in our society.

Babu Jagjivan Ram is a natural leader. He is a practical statesman and shuns impulsive demagoguery. His words are carefully measured. There is an uncommon economy and elegance of expression in Babuji's speeches. He is an engaging speaker, always in tune with the atmosphere around him, always responsive, always ready to give and take. He has a lively sense of humour. When he warms up to a subject, his performance is memorable, for both his wit and wisdom. He is not unfamiliar with the out and thrust of parliamentary swordsmanship. He never fails to employ his skills to good account. Nor does he spare his critics and detractors. On occasions, he can be devastating. However, he leaves no traces of rancour. When he has settled his score, he is ready to call it quits. He has a genial large heartedness, which is disarming. In Parliament as well as in administration, he has a reassuring way of dealing with difficult questions. He has the assured touch of seasoned master. He is gifted with a sound political instinct. That is why he is reckoned not only as an outstanding parliamentarian of consummate skill but also a statesman of rare ability. He has a statesman's clarity and breadth of vision. Not for him the pettifogging preoccupation with distracting, meaningless, meandering detail. He has trained himself to look at problems in their perspective and that makes it possible for him to bring his robust common sense and understanding to bear on the solution of what appears to be an intractable problem. He has a sense of discipline and loyalty, which makes him a good leader and an equally good colleague.

I have had the privilege of seeing Babu Jagjivan Ram functioning on the floor of the Lok Sabha as well as in Committees and other meetings. I have always had the feeling that in fact as well as in talent, in skill as well as in effectiveness, in exposition and in eloquence and in elaborate replies as well as in casual repartee, Babu Jagjivan Ram is one of our ablest parliamentarians of eminence.

In his long public career, Babu Jagjivan Ram had held many official and non-official positions. He entered the provincial legislature at a

comparatively young age. He was inducted into the Central Cabinet in the company of a galaxy of great leaders of dazzling eminence and ability. Except for a short period, he must carve continuously in the central cabinet with all the three distinguished Prime Ministers since the historic transfer of power to the present day. It is a measure of his mass appeal and his political stature that after the split, the ruling Congress led by Shrimati Gandhi was known as Jagjivan Ram-Congress. He has held and administered a succession of portfolios with distinction and the story of him exploits and achievements mirrors the many facets of our national problems and the many splendoured contributions of Babu Jagjivan Ram in solving them. There is nothing that he has touched has not embellished. Looking at his momentous life, one looks at a panoramic procession of events, which have left their indelible imprints on history, and through this procession of events shines the smiling and friendly image of steadfastness, maturity, compassion, humanity and ennobled suffering and dedication.



Centenary of Babu Jagjivan Ram

Today is the beginning of Babu Jagjivan Ram's hundredth year. On the threshold of the Centenary, the Government and the People of India should seriously consider ways and means of appropriately commemorating his manifold contributions to national life. One obvious way would be to confer Bharat Ratna on him posthumously, precedents for which are many. Of the 41 Bharat Ratnas conferred, at least so far, 10 were posthumous. Babu Jagjivan Ram's life and work fulfills in an exceptional and incomparable measure the criterion of distinguished and outstanding public service for Bharat Ratna. To confer Bharat Ratna on Babu Jagjivan Ram would be to recognize the Gandhian dimension of the national discourse for Dalit welfare.

Babu Jagjivan Ram was sworn in as a member of the first Interim Cabinet on 2 September 1946 when the nation stood on the threshold of freedom. Barely 39, Babu Jagjivan Ram was then the youngest and most representative Dalit in the Cabinet led by Pandit Nehru and on the national scene. Dr. Ambedkar joined the Cabinet later and because Gandhiji intervened on his behalf despite the fact that Baba Saheb had opposed Gandhiji tooth and nail most of his life that was an example of Gandhian grace. In the first Interim Cabinet, Babuji's colleagues included giants like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Shri Sharat Chandra Bose and Sardar Baldev Singh.

Babuji was a vintage parliamentarian, elected under the Government of India Act, 1935. The elections represented a resounding victory for the All India Congress and a rout for other groups and factions opposed to the Congress. The British rulers then made overtures to Babuji. Babuji repelled the approaches with contempt and disdain. It was then that Babu gave him the great testimonial describing him as the fire tested 24 carat gold.

Babuji's life is an inspiring saga of distinguished public service, which did India and its freedom struggle proud. As a pupil of Gandhiji and an able lieutenant and younger colleague of Babu Rajendra Prasad, his role in public life was basically conciliatory, constructive and integrationist. He served in the Central Cabinet for nearly 31 years, a unique record of longevity with many towering achievements to his credit as a leader of the nation. In every portfolio he held, he won notable laurels. He was a successful minister holding portfolios as diverse as Labour, Communications, Transport, Railways, Employment, Rehabilitation, Food, Agriculture, Cooperation, Community Development, Defence, and Irrigation. His successes in the fields of Food and Agriculture and Defence during critical times were historic and monumental. Babuji was by common consent a stalwart and unsurpassed parliamentarian during the Nehru era and thereafter. There was in Babuji a native homespun charm of wit, warmth and wisdom.

The most glorious chapter of his political life was when he was India's Defence Minister, when Pakistan was trounced and Bangladesh was born. Nearly a hundred thousand soldiers of Pakistan surrendered to India. Pakistan's military back and its overbearing aggressive ambitions were broken and damaged. We remember Babuji as a progress statesman, a gentle messiah with the spiritual inheritance of his father, Guru Ravi Das and Mahatma Gandhi in public life. Confrontation was not his style, conciliation pragmatism and solution of problems was his forte.

After Sardar Patel, he was perhaps the most astute administrator. In him, Dalits found a leader of great stature and rather found a statesman of high quality insight and perspicacity. In this centenary year, a grateful Latin remembers him with affection and respect. What we must do to commemorate his life and work is to create a world Parliamentary Academy.

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Shri Subramaniam: A Great Personality

Three personalities have influenced Shri Subramaniam's life and career—his paternal uncle, Swami Chidbhawananda, a crusader of the Ramakrishna Mission whose example laid the foundation for a life of austerity in the service of the poor; Shri C. Rajagopalachari who groomed him as an administrator and a parliamentarian; and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, whose scientific approach and socialistic vision have guided the course of his political career.

Born of peasant parentage at Pollachi on 30 January 1910 in the Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu Shri Subramaniam received his early education at Pollachi, and his higher education at Madras where he obtained his Bachelor's degrees in Science and in Law. It was while serving his political apprenticeship in jail that he started studying economics. He set up legal practice at Coimbatore in 1936. After two more terms of incarceration in 1941 and in 1942, he became the President of the Coimbatore District Congress Committee and a member of the Working Committee of the State Congress. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India in 1946.

Shri Subramaniam became Minister of Finance, Education and Law in the then Madras State Cabinet in 1952, the position he retained under both Shri C. Rajagopalachari and Shri K. Kamraj for a period of ten years. His stewardship was characterized by sustained educational progress and all-round development in the State. Tamil Nadu became one of the few States to introduce free primary education for all children. Shri Subramaniam was also instrumental in introducing the mid-day meals programme for the poorer children attending schools – a programme that was financed partly by Government contribution, and partly by mobilization of local resources at the village level.

In 1962, Shri Subramaniam was elected Member of the Lok Sabha and elevated to Cabinet rank. He has been Minister in charge of Steel (1962-63), Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering (1963-64), Food and Agriculture (1964-66) and Food, Agriculture, Community Development & Co-operation (1966-

67), under Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Shrimati Indira Gandhi. His tenure as Minister in charge of Steel and Heavy Industries saw the initiation of a number of steps not only for improving the working of the existing industrial units but also for setting up new ones. As minister for Food and Agriculture, Shri Subramaniam played a decisive role in the introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds and more intensive application of fertilizers and water, which paved the way for increased output of cereal, in the later 60s and the rapid progress towards national self-sufficiency in foodgrains by 1971.

Between 1967 and 1969, Shri Subramaniam was Chairman of the Committee on the Aeronautics Industry set up by the Government of India. He became the Interim President of the Indian National Congress during the critical days of July-December, 1969. Shri Subramaniam continues to be a member of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, and of the Central Parliamentary Board of that Party. He has played a key role in the formulation of the economic policies of the Congress Party.

In August 1970, Shri Subramaniam became the Chairman of the National Commission on Agriculture. In March, 1971, he was invited by Shrimati Indira Gandhi to Join the Union Cabinet as Minister of Planning and also Deputy Chairman of the National Planning Commission. The Department of Science and Technology was also added to his charge subsequently. In July 1972, Shri Subramaniam took over as Minister of Industrial Development giving up the portfolio of Planning, but retained Science and Technology. He was the guiding spirit behind the formulation of the first Science and Technology Plan of India. Since October 1974, Shri Subramaniam has been the Union Finance Minister. His stewardship of Finance has been characterized by a gradual check in inflation and increase in production.

Shri Subramaniam has been keenly interested in problems of improving the nutritional standards of children in developing countries. In September 1970, at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Shri Subramaniam prepared a strategy statement for fighting protein hunger in the developing countries, and in May 1971, headed a panel of experts that drew up recommendations for action by the General Assembly. In recognition of his contribution to, and interest in the problems of agricultural development, policies and programmes. Shri Subramaniam was elected, in his personal capacity, a member of the Board of Governors of the International Rice Research Institute, Manila, and of the International Maize and Wheat Research Centre, Maxico.

With his early training in Science, and his tutelage under Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Subramaniam is an ardent believer in the role of science in engineering.

He was conferred Bharat Ratna Award on 12 April 1998 for his invaluable service to the Nation.



Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and His Contributions

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a national leader and statesman of exceptional calibre. He was a great patriot. He was the scion of a distinguished family. His father was the great Ashutosh Mookherji who was one of the most distinguished judges and a great Vice Chancellor. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was himself an outstanding Vice Chancellor at a very young age. I have had the privilege of knowing his brother Justice Shri Rama Prasad Mookerjee who retired as a Judge of the High Court of Calcutta and served as a member of the Executive Council of The Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) during the time I was its Executive Chairman in the 1960s. He stayed with me in Delhi on a number of occasions and took an active part in matters constitutional and legal. His son, Sri Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee retired as Chief Justice of Bombay High Court and invited me to deliver the First Rama Prasad Mookerjee Memorial Lecture in 1996. I have organized an important lecture of far-reaching importance in the late 1960s in memory of the late Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee. The lecture was delivered by the late Sri K. Subba Rao, Chief Justice of India and was presided over by me.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was an ardent votary, committed exponent and inspiring exemplar of the cause of India's National Unity and National Integration. He lived and died for that cause.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a member of Jawaharlal Nehru's first National Cabinet and a distinguished member of the Constituent Assembly of India. His parliamentary acumen and eloquence made him a pre-eminent parliamentarian. His contribution to the making of India's Constitution, on which I am at present preparing a volume, shows the depth of his understanding and the breadth of his national vision.

I propose that in the Centenary Year of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, an institution to be named as Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Constitutional and Parliamentary Academy or Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Institute of Democracy and National Integration should be established principally with the following objectives:

1. To promote the study of and research in democratic constitutions, their strengths and weaknesses and their evolution and dynamics;
2. To study the working of the institutions of governance under different constitutional systems and the role of cultural, social, electoral, economic and political factors in the working of constitutional democracies;
3. To promote the study of federalism, secularism, national integration, urban and rural local self-government including Panchayat raj, and other institutions and aspects of national integration, citizen participation and democratic constitutional systems;
4. To provide a retreat for study, reflection and interaction for scholars statesmen, legislators, judges, educators and civil servants interested in and committed to democracy, rule of law, basic human rights, fundamental civic duties, citizenship education and allied areas relevant to democratic life and constitutional culture and institutions of democratic governance.
5. To study the theme and issues of National Unity and National Integration as unifying elements of coherence in strengthening democracy and to promote, foster and disseminate the message of unity in diversity, national integration and cultural pluralism. The Academy or the Institute will not duplicate the work, which was pioneered by ICPS and is now being done by the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies for orientation and training courses, which is confined to new members of Parliament and new entrants to services.

In my opinion, the proposed Academy or Institute should be set up by the Government of India as an autonomous Trust on the lines of IGNCA Trust, which provides a precedent. The IGNCA was set up under a Trust Deed with a grant of 25 acres of land from Janpath to Man Singh Road and a corpus fund of Rupees Fifty Crores as well as a building fund of Rupees One Hundred Crores.

Since the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies is now defunct and is in the process of disintegration, it may be possible for the land allotted to it more than 25 years ago to be allotted to the Academy or the Institute. In the alternative, another plot of two to three acres may be allotted to the proposed Academy. It may also be feasible for the Academy to use the facilities of Sapru House or any other suitable and adequate space, which may be allotted to the Academy until it has its own premises. □

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: The Unforgottable Son of India

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri epitomized the quintessence of India's genius for synthesis and consensus. He had a rare gift of innate understanding of human beings and of human problems. It was a part of his nature to be considerate and courteous to others. He rose to the pinnacle of political prestige and power but that did not diminish his essential goodness and his fundamental faith in the essential goodness of Man. He had inner reserves of strength and he could be firm to the point of being unbending. It was, however, impossible for him to be overbearing or impolite. He had infinite patience, a rare quality in a statesman whose hands were always more than full. He was a great listener. His sympathetic listening created confidence that he cared for what someone else was saying and that he meant what he said. He was soft and suave but he was also a shrewd and astute politician.

I was privileged to know Lal Bahadurji closely when I was an Independent Member of Lok Sabha. I did not belong to his Party but he always gave me the feeling that he considered me very close to him, and I know that he meant it.

After his triumphant leadership during the Indo-Pak conflict in 1965, he was good enough to ask me to accompany him to Jodhpur, which was my constituency. Jodhpur was frequently bombed during the war and I had repeatedly raised the issue of proper air cover for Jodhpur. He and Shri Y.B. Chavan had agreed to the Deputy Defence Minister, Dr. Raju to go with me to Jodhpur during the armed conflict. He not only invited me to go to Jodhpur with him but he made a feeling reference at the public meeting in Jodhpur to my effective and articulate representation of my constituency, and this he

did in spite of the fact that I did not belong to his party and he could easily have taken advantage of the situation for his party.

On our way back from Jodhpur, he shaped the slogan 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' in the plan and used it at the public meeting in Jaipur which he invited me to attend. When we got down in Jaipur, he saw to it that I should stay at the Raj Bhawan and then he saw to it that I was seated on the dais at the public meeting. It was at this meeting that he exhorted the people to miss a meal a week to help the country to tide over the food shortages.

Another unforgettable incident that comes to my mind occurred at a meeting of the Committee of Leaders of the Opposition in Parliament, which was formed during the Indo-Pak conflict. I was a Member of that Committee. At one of the meetings of that Committee, he read out the draft of a letter he proposed to write to the Secretary-General of the United Nations with regard to ceasefire with Pakistan. After he had read out the draft, he said that he hoped that it met with the approval of the Members. I thought that two changes were crucial and significant and sought his leave to put forward my suggestions. I was not sure if the Government would be inclined to accept the suggestions but Lal Bahadurji promptly responded by saying, "Yes, I think, you are right. I shall make these changes." and he did.

On 10 December 1964, the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies was inaugurated in the Central Hall of Parliament House by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India. Lal Bahadurji had taken considerable interest in the idea but told me that he would not be able to attend the inaugural function or to speak at it. When the function was about to start, he walked in and occupied a seat among the guests in the front row, and would not move to the dais. I went to him to request him to take a seat on the dais and was able to persuade him only because of my close personal equation with him. He kept up his deep interest in the institute and its programme of activities as long as he lived.

I recall him as a parliamentarian who was widely respected because of his intrinsic sincerity. The diverse and disparate membership of the Houses of Parliament trusted and respected him. He was not eloquent in his speeches but he was charming and persuasive. He was anxious to do his duty but was never inclined to be keen on scoring a debating point. In parliamentary debates, he was extraordinarily responsive to the House and the House treated him with respect and affection.

I recall the occasion when he was piloting the Official Language Bill. Many Members of the Opposition had walked out but I had remained in the House to participate in the clause-by-clause discussion in the Third Reading

debate. I had a great deal to say on the Official Language Policy of the Government and the failures of its linguistic policy over the years. He answered it in a very mild manner half agreeing with me and yet not quite agreeing with me. In the lobby, when I happened to meet him that very day, I told him that I was sorry that I could not agree with him, he said, "Don't you see that I agree with you substantially." Lal Bahadurji knew the art of emphasizing the positive aspects of life. He told me on another occasion at a leisurely conversation that the half-empty glass should also be seen as being 'half-full'.

Lal Bahadur had positive approach to legislation and that is why he was really a magician at synthesizing and at producing a consensus.

Lal Bahadurji rendered yeoman services to the field of public administration and provided a rare kind and quality of leadership at a time when people thought that Jawaharlal Nehru's death had left a void, which could not possibly be filled. Lal Bahadur filled it in his own unique and inimitable manner. It is a pity that, he did not live to lend luster to the office of Prime Minister long enough. He might have made a singular contribution to the process of consensualizing and synthesizing of the political process to save it from splitting fragmentation. The promise of consensualization and synthesizing of our democratic process, which was beginning to emerge during the last phase of his leadership could not be redeemed because the cruel hands of fate snatched him away from our midst in the hour of his triumph and glory. He left us to mourn the irreparable loss in our national life of those homespun qualities which made Lal Bahadur truly great and which still make the national memory lane fragrant with the flowers of those reminiscences.

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Great Singhvi and His Reminiscence

I was a loner as a child, rebellious and recalcitrant. I would wander around the ruins, caves, lakes and the hillocks near Jodhpur, all by myself. In my childhood, I loved horse riding. As a child, I once rode a camel all by myself and went many miles not being able to stop it and dismount. I was a bit frightened initially and then as the camel gathered speed, I gained confidence and enjoyed the ride. All I had done was to climb up to the saddle and then the camel itself was in command. It happened in Sambhar where my (paternal) aunt's husband was the District and Sessions Judge. There was much distress in the family. Several search parties were sent in different directions. They found me and the camel several miles away near a camel track sharing the food of raikas with the tribe of camel people. At the end of the day, I had gained notoriety as an adventurous and a brave lad.

I also loved reading the *Ramayana* and *Gita* to my mother. Reciting Sanskrit slokas was my favourite past time. As I grew into adolescence, I became an ardent reader and began to compose poems of my own. I began writing poems regularly when I was about 12 years of age. Kite flying was also a favourite past time for me and my brother. I also enjoyed performing various parts in an exclusive Ramlila at home. I was attracted to theatre.

My mother was my most beloved teacher and my best friend. Among schoolmates, there were many different friends from one class to the other. Some of them are no more. I am still in touch with many of them. Unfortunately, they are a diminishing tribe.

Many a dream I have dreamt; to many a destination by my dreams I was sent. Those dreams filled my life with a fragrance. When I awoke, my dreams were a challenge.

My earliest childhood memory is that of my maternal grandmother. I

was not yet four. I used to play with a mare in the stables, feed it, fondle it and even climb up its back without a saddle.

My maternal grandmother died early and I remember when I was taken as a little child to give my shoulder to her coffin and join the cortege.

I was very close to my mother after my grandmother died.

My grandfather had a large presence. My ancestors were administrators and negotiators on behalf of the State. Some of them were commanders-in-chief. We lived in the princely State of Marwar and in the city of Jodhpur. My father made a break with the feudal tradition was one of the leaders of the Movement for Responsible Government in the State called Lok Prishad, which was an affiliate of the National Congress Movement. My elder brother was the favourite child in the family and was a constant companion of my grandfather. He, therefore, occupied a higher pedestal. I was very close to my mother whose love and care was very important to me. She was a superb teacher. She would make me read books, especially scriptures. She would sing Bhajans to me. My father was a stern disciplinarian. I would make myself scarce when he arrived. Many years later, I realized how proud he was of my academic successes and me and how much he loved me in his own distant and disciplinarian way. In those days, fathers did not cuddle their children. There was a communication gap between us. For the first time, I felt that he was immensely pleased with me when I stood first in my middle examination, which was a very prestigious Board Examination in the princely State of Jodhpur. The examinations were conducted by the Directorate of Education. One, Mr. A.P. Cox, a British educationist headed the Directorate of Education. The Board Examination used to be very tough and getting a first at the examination entitled a student to Maharaja's scholarship. I was moved to tears when I found that my father, whom I feared so much, had himself copied my poems in a specially bound book, which he kept with himself. On another occasion, I found him reading some of my poems to his friends. That was an accolade behind my back but certainly beyond my wildest dreams. My father was a staunch nationalist. His patriotism inspired me. He had a way of encouraging me to read literatures, philosophy languages and history. He was a great book lover. I was given the freedom to buy any book I wanted. At a very young age, I read a great deal of literature (English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Rajasthani), philosophy and history. I became a voracious reader. What I read cast a spell on me during that period. I remember reading in my bed until the early hours in the morning. As a student, I had always a number of my classmates come to me for studying with me as I came to be regarded as a very good coach! Different books influenced me at different stages of my

life. The scriptures, especially, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and the Vaishnava traditions, especially, Bhakti poetry, Buddhism and Jainism had a very important influence on me. There were many visitors of literary distinction at our house. Astrologers, Sanskrit pundits, philosophers, journalists and local poets and writers came in a constant stream. Literature, Philosophy and History interested me deeply. I became a student of Indology at a very young age. I read Bengali, Hindi and English writers extensively. I read Sanskrit from my early childhood and had committed a number of Subhashitas to memory. The Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Urdu and Rajasthani poets fascinated me. Sanskrit occupied the pride of place for me. In those days, English language dominated the educational scene. English literature, especially, poetry, short stories and novels were an important part of my curricular and extra-curricular reading. I read Gandhiji, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Sharat Chandra, Dr. K.M. Munshi, Rahul Sankrityayana, and almost all Hindi writers, and had the privilege of knowing many of them.

The events, which influenced me most in my life were the events connected with the freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi's ascetic and inspiring figure, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's inspiring personality, his personality and his English prose and the way J.P. and Subhash Chandra Bose had escaped from the British prisons. I met Smt. Aruna Asaf Ali and found her a figure of inspiration. In my University days, I read most of Marx and Lenin. Those books were eminently affordable and attractive. I read Harold Laski and was dazed by his brilliance. Jawahar Lal Nehru, J.P., Laski, Sydney, and Beatrice Webb led me to pronounced socialist inclination but developed a more critical attitude in later years about state regimentation. Writings of Acharya Narendra Deo, Dr. Sampurnanand and Dr. Lohia, however, stressed the heritage of India and the essential message of social justice. Gandhian socialism had a resonance of humanism and of Indian values, which exerted a powerful influence on my mind. Shrimad Raj Chandra's correspondence with Gandhiji taught me the relevance of Ahimsa. I read Gandhiji's writings regularly and found in them the glory of India. In my intellectual outlook, there was a universal eclecticism, an interest in Indian renaissance and Indological predilection. I found D.D. Kaushambi's interpretations attractive but too dogmatically Marxist.

In my school and college days, I was the acknowledged leader of the student community. I was the Prime Minister in the Parliament. On one occasion, I was asked to ceremonially inaugurate a Session of the Student Parliament as the President of the Republic, which was not yet born. Kavi Sammelans interested me and I used to go to many of them. I began editing

a literary magazine of considerable distinction when I was barely 17-18 years of age. As editor of that magazine, I corresponded with some of the great Hindi writers of that time. Later in Allahabad, I got the opportunity to meet and see many distinguished poets and writers. Jodhpur and Allahabad became, and have remained my two most beloved cities.

My reverence is for Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji. Politically, I was divided in my allegiance between Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Jayaprakashji. I admired the glorious chapter of India's integration which was being written by Sardar Patel and felt that he was the anchor of our nationalism. Partition was a traumatic event. Trainloads of refugees arrived from Sindh in Jodhpur. One of the saddest days of my life was when we heard that Gandhiji had been assassinated.

Shri Ganeshi Lal Ustad, a poet and journalist and a forceful writer had great influence on my writings. Satya Prakash Joshi, Vijay Dan Detha, both well-known writers were my good friends. I came to know Jainendra Kumarji and Mahadeviji early in my life. I also knew Machaweji closely.

In those days, we used to see pictures of princess, Margaret and Pamela Mountbetten. Little did I imagine at that time that I would have an opportunity in later life to know them personally?

My achievements as a student were mostly academic and literary. Up to class six, I did not show any promise as a student except that I was able to recite Sanskrit poetry non-stop for several hours. When I secured a first at the Board Examination in the middle class (7th), it was a turning point for me. When I was in the 8th class, and barely 12+ years of age, I took the initiative to establish a Kumar Sahitya Samhelan, which had branches in many parts of the princely State of Jodhpur. Getting a first and several distinctions in my matriculation examinations was another milestone, so was the intermediate examination and the presidency of the College Union. Going to Allahabad University was an important decision and being selected as a Rotary Foundation Fellow and to be admitted to both Cambridge and Harvard when I was just about 21 was the stuff of which dreams were made.

As a young man, I used to be preoccupied to be disappointed. The saddest day in the year 1948 was when we heard the news of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

Marriage was not on my mind when I was doing my Ph.D. in the USA and when I was teaching and researching in the United States of America. It seems, however, that it was on my future wife's mind, who knew me only from my writings and made up her mind to marry me. She and her family visited my parents in Jodhpur when I was still in the USA and it seems my

parents took to her. I do not know whether to call it an arranged marriage or a love marriage or both. In a sense, it was a svayamvara, but she was also chosen by my parents. Perhaps, good marriages are made in heaven. My wife has been a great source of strengths to me in my wife. As I said in a dedication, I owe many debts to her, which I can never discharge. My wife recounted in one of her articles how she made her acquaintance with my writings and on the basis of what she had heard about me and how she resolved to marry me or not at all.

I have lived all my life in Law for nearly 50 years now. I have also spent 8 years in Parliament and 7 years as India's High Commissioner in the UK. We have reasons to be proud of our legal system and the impartiality of our judiciary. The judicial system is in a sense collapsing under its own weight of arrears. Law's delays have become endemic. Arrears seem to be intractable. Those who seek justice have to wait a lifetime. It is not a user-friendly system. There are also allegations of corruption in the judiciary. Lawyers are also to blame. We must address these questions on an urgent basis and redress the problems.

"Time in motion comes to me like the waves of the mighty ocean. When it appears to stand still, I see little toy house of sand on the seashore. Time is indeed that mighty wave which carves and etches images of consciousness and makes and unmakes little houses of sand and leaves its footprints on the sand. I watch the waves and the sands of time; I watch the eternal dance of the Abiding and the Transient in their shared co-existence and interaction, linking the present moment with the procession of countless moments, which preceded it and the countless moments to follow in succession. It links the momentary with the eternal. It links all human life, indeed all life, in a web of interdependence and connects us all in togetherness."

"In the tumult of life and in solitude, I wander like a cloud and flow like a brook. My sky is without any boundaries. The mountains, valleys and plateaus are my age-old friends. I hear the guileless chatter of birds. I also hear the cacophony emanating from the political theatre, bringing home to me how Time and Space permeates us and how the subterranean streams of our consciousness are reflected in the kaleidoscopic mirror of social and individual experience. I hear and revel in the resonant music of our heritage in the daily rhythm of my life. Time also offers me a continuous dialogue with innumerable forms and ways of culture, dance, music and words with myriad meanings and moods."

"I do not claim to be a chronicler or an amanuensis of Time but I dialogue with it constantly and spontaneously. I also overhear the dialogue

between Time and Human Consciousness in all its creativity. I am a witness to the tension of creativity and the Promethean defiance of the human spirit. I hear the words of the song of creativity and often hum its tune. I have often dreamt of drawing with line and colour on the canvas of Time. For all these stirrings of the spirit, restless and in repose, Bharat, my India, is the source and mainspring of my inspiration. I live at that source of life and that living at the source is truly the eternal festival for me in this continuous celebration of Time, its rainbow colours and its orchestra of sounds. That is my sense of India."

"My sense of India and its heritage do not confine itself to political boundaries, important though they are. My sense of India is the crowning glory of humanity. It is a quest and an exploration. It is a cluster of values and the core of spirituality."

"For me the sense of India is a civilizational sense, an inner experience and its many splendoured manifestations stretching from the ancient to the present and the future. It is also the sense of new frontiers, a discovery of new horizons where Earth and Sky make their tryst with destiny. It is a state of cosmic consciousness where my thought imparts a depth of sensitivity and compassion to the ceaseless striving. It consecrates India and the world of my dreams with a sense the human and the divine. In those thought processes, enlivened by the axiomatic truth of 'isavasyamidam sarvaram', I have often drawn and redrawn different route maps for the Future of the Past, for the onward journey of civilization and for a practical balance sheet of every day events and problems. I have constantly endeavoured to ensure that my dialogue with Time does not deteriorate into an idle game of chess or a conversation rooted in false prejudices and rationalizations, or moves and counter moves of futile bickering and pointless controversies making thoughts mere pawns and puppets in a polemical game."

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Knowing Dr. Singhvi through the Eyes of Mrs. Singhvi

I thought at first that I could write volume about him, but when I sat down to it; I did not quite know where to begin and how to begin. Findings myself at a loss for words, it dawned upon me that it would naturally be difficult to write briefly about someone so close and so intimate, someone so vast and so versatile, someone so loving and giving, someone with whom I have spent forty-five years of my life.

I know that whatever I say or write about Dr. Singhvi would fall short of the walking encyclopedia of knowledge and humanity that is Dr. Singhvi. I am a witness to his austere habits, his humility and his self-respect, his erudition and scholarly approach, his poetic and aesthetic sensibility, his unfailing courtesy and consideration, his reverence for his parents and his mentors, his respect for women generally, his love for children, especially his grandchildren, his deep humanity and compassion, his sense of justice, his patriotism, his devotion to the heritage of India and to the common heritage of mankind, his global perspective, his love of law, philosophy, languages and literature, his enthusiasm for the cause he espouses, his loyalty to his friends, his sense of family values, his writing and speaking talents, his diplomatic skills and myriads of other qualities and achievements. I shall, however, confine myself to more personal aspects of Dr. Singhvi.

Dr. Singhvi hails from Rajasthan, from Jodhpur to be precise. Jodhpur is one of his magnificent obsessions. He is capable of waxing eloquent for hours about the history, the culture and the people of Jodhpur. He would cite the famous Bangla writer Sharat babu in support of his self-confessed parochial love for Jodhpur. Sharat babu had said that a person who does not love the little patch of green in the foreground or the backward of his house

cannot be expected to love his country or the world at large. Dr. Singhvi's love for Allahabad is second only to his love for Jodhpur. Of course, his love for India overrides all his attachments.

I was born in Bhagalpur and grew up in Calcutta. Jodhpur is far away. I came to know and admire Jodhpur and its code of honour and way of life only after my marriage.

Jodhpur is famous for the excellence of its cuisine and culinary skills. Jodhpurians and more particularly members of my husband's family are connoisseurs of good food. My mother-in-law had many exceptional gifts. If anything was cooked by her or under her supervision, it was invariably the most exquisite dish. Singhvi would discuss food and its fine points as if they constituted a workshop of artists and art critics. By contrast, in my parental home, we were not allowed to be judgmental about the food served to us. Fortunately, for me, my mother-in-law taught me the fine points of the Jodhpur art of cooking, mainly, I suspect, for the sake of her beloved son who is a small eater but has a very nuanced and sophisticated palate.

Dr. Singhvi has an insatiable appetite for work and is a compulsive workaholic. When he is working, he is always completely at peace with himself. It is not strange or uncommon for me to find him at work until the early hours of the morning.

The ceaseless quest of knowledge defines Dr. Singhvi. I think of him as a favourite son of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning but it seems he was also adopted by Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and wisdom, perhaps because he was born on Deepavali, Goddess Lakshmi's annual festival day, and was therefore, named 'Laxmimal' the champion of wealth and wisdom.

Thanks to his father's advice and Dr. K.M. Munshi's intervention, the young man reluctantly agreed to study law though left to him, he wanted to pursue a career in literature or Indology. Slowly but surely, is the discipline of law grew all him. After he returned from the USA, he plunged himself into law practice and soon the Goddess of Fortune smiled on him. He has, however, an aversion to handling money and an aversion to shopping except in a bookstore. He does not like to carry any money on him. Even when he has to shop for his personal requirements, which are very few, he thinks of it as a kind of punishment. But if members of the family hand him their shopping lists when he is travelling, he would always make sure to bring home every single item on the shopping lists.

Dr. Singhvi would forego a meal rather than eat alone by himself. Dining by himself is a torture for him. He would occasionally invite friends or bring them home without letting us know in advance. Perhaps that is a part of his

family tradition. His father is remembered for his legendary hospitality. During the days when he was practicing actively and would have his lunch in the Supreme Court or the High Court; I had to remember that food for four or five guests and a quantity of sweets sufficient for everyone in the advocates' lunch room had to be sent. When he dines at home, I make it a point to sit with him even if I have already had my meal. During the lunch, he often allows himself to be disturbed by phone calls or members of the staff seeking instructions except when we have outside guests. When he senses that I am unhappy with such intrusions he would quickly make amends, but only to please me.

All his friends and I keep telling him that he should not exert himself to the point of exhaustion and that he should learn the art of saying 'no' to all kinds of requests to advise people who write to him, to help them in solving their problems, to write forewords to books, to launch them, to address meetings, and generally to allow all his time to be taken up so that he is left with very little time for himself. He would smile, turn around the argument and say that, maybe he is never exhausted simply because he is not negative and has not learnt the art of saying no!

Despite all his preoccupations, he has always found time for me, and for our children and grandchildren. As a very young toddler, our son, Abhishek would time his demand for a drive in the car just before midnight when Dr. Singhvi would be home after his professional conferences. He would never say no and he would invariably drive us around until Abhishek was lulled into sleep. His children and grandchildren adore him because they feel the depth of his love and his goodness.

Dr. Singhvi is a compulsive scholar, a compulsive dreamer and a compulsive doer. He does it all with rare equanimity. It is strange but true that some like him can never keep his books and papers in order. He is tolerant and democratic to a fault but not when his papers and books cannot be instantly located. His mind works so swiftly that it is impossible for his posse of private secretaries and other staff to keep pace with him. When I point out to him that the chaos is created mainly because he works on twenty or thirty projects at a time and has at any given time fifty books and fifty files waiting for him. Then, he never allows a file (on which his decision is required) to remain with him for more than a day or two. He reads his mail himself and writes many of his letters in his own hand, a practice, which the British elite appreciated because of his personal touch. Although he generally speaks at public meetings, seminars and conferences extempore, I have seen him writing his major university and other important lectures in the plane and almost

always in his handwriting and not on the computer or the Dictaphone. He cites former chief justice of India Shri Patanjali Sastri who said that the arrival of the shorthand writers has paved the way for long winded verbal prolixity. He says, he likes to think with his writing instrument in his hand. Most of the time, Dr. Singhvi pens his writings in his own hand. He is of the opinion that stenographic dictation is only for correspondence, not for creative and thought provoking writing. Strangely, after he has put down a poem or an essay on paper, he loses interest in it. Sometimes he would scribble a poem on a torn envelope and sometimes on the vacant margins of a newspaper, to gather and preserve those valuable pieces is my responsibility. He writes while travelling in a car. I have given strict instructions to his personal attendant Madhusudan and his chauffeur that no piece of paper on which Dr. Singhvi has scribbled anything should be thrown away. However, sometimes when a book or a piece of paper is not easily found, Dr. Singhvi can be seen suffering the same kind of agony as a woman who has lost some precious diamond jewellery. Often it gives me the feel of an earthquake. As to the chaos of books and papers around him, he says he finds it conducive for his work! According to him, a certain amount of chaos and disorder is necessary for creating something coherent. His bedroom, his office, his drawing room and his car are in sense extensions of his library or perhaps extensions of his polymath mind.

He is least concerned with the domestic chores. That is my exclusive domain. On the other hand, he always consults me and gives me feeling of partnerships whatever he does. He claims that he is good cook but that assertion does not inspire any confidence.

Sometimes, he is so lost in the world of his thoughts that I take a lightened dig at him he might not just take me to be a stranger and say 'namaste' and walk away. In fact, he is a very gallant gentleman.

We have spent 45 years of our married life together. The charisma and the glamour of his wisdom and creativity have still not worn thin. It is as fresh in my mind as it was before our marriage when I chose him (svyamvara) to be my husband even before I had met him. That is why my children tell me that I made one right decision in my life and all else followed. That decision was to either marry him or not at all.

We two are quite different individuals but love resolves all differences. Moreover, it is impossible not to love this man who has always been and will always be my first priority. Moreover, at this point I must close lest I should exceed the constraints of space while extolling my own husband.

□

Sri Aurobindo

Dr. K.M. Munshi was my mentor and guru in Law and in my life. He was a pupil of Sri Aurobindo in Baroda. I am proud to be Sri Aurobindo's eminent pupil's humble pupil. Dr. Munshi guided me from the time since I was 18 and inducted me eventually not only into the world of law and advocacy and public life but also into the universe of India's literary and cultural heritage. Under his inspiration, I had the privilege to learn of the grace and beauty of Sri Aurobindo's luminous Sadhana and Tapsya essentially through the pathways of Vac. Sri Aurobindo's literary and philosophical writings were my route to the master, majestic and lyrical, rhythmic and resonant, vibrant and invigorating, inspiring and uplifting.

For me, and through Dr. K.M. Munshi and my father (who was also an ardent votary of Lord Mahavira) and Mahatma Gandhi, the trinity of the pantheon of my youth was completed. That trinity consisted of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. My mother who was my first teacher gave me the living legacy of Gita and the precepts of consecrated and detached Karma, Ahimsa and Compassion. Dr. Munshi, the great exponent of the heritage of India explained to me how the Trinity I adored was but three manifestations of the same Light and its effulgence for each one of them fulfilled the promise of Lord Krishna: 'Sambhavami Yuge Yuge'—(संभवामि युगे युगे)

Sri Aurobindo's father did not want him to turn to the heritage of India or to its spiritual tradition, but Sri Aurobindo became by providential good fortune an inspired Indologist, a great Sanskrit scholar and a great worshipper in the shrine of Indian Nationalism and quintessential spirituality.

In the earlier phase of his life, Sri Aurobindo himself had 'hardly a living faith in God'. As he himself put it: "The agnostic was in me, the skeptic

was in me and I was not absolutely sure that there was God at all ... yet something drew me to the truth of the Vedas, the truth of the Gita, the truth of the Hindu religion". With all that strictly European intellectual upbringing and with all that forced aloofness and isolation from India, Indians and Indian heritage, Sri Aurobindo became the most ardent votary of Mother India. He lived a life Divine, and became one of the greatest exponents of India and its heritage. He was the one who loved the people of India selflessly and ceaselessly. Sri Aurobindo conversed with Sri Krishna and prayed: "If thou art, then thou knowest my heart. Thou knowest ... that I ask only to be allowed to live and work for this people whom I love and to whom I pray that I may devote my life." Many a time Sri Krishna Vasudev appeared before him, guided him, graced him, emboldened him, reassured him, made him fearless and free of doubts and anxiety. It was in Alipore Jail that the might of Sri Krishna entered into him and illumined his path to Pondicherry. Swami Vivekananda's disciple, Sister Nivedita also bade him go away from the British jurisdiction. He had also had the guidance of Swami Vivekananda himself. Says Sri Aurobindo said, "It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence."

For my wife and me and for my colleagues in Sri Aurobindo Smriti Samiti, notably Dr. Karan Singh, Kireetbhai Joshi, Kantibhai Dalal and Professor Indranath Choudhary the installation of the beautiful 9 feet statue of Sri Aurobindo in his own birthplace (Sri Aurobindo Bhawan in Shakespeare Sarani in Kolkata) on his birthday is a dream come true. It was an occasion of joy and fulfilment for us all. In addition, I saw the auspicious installation of the statue as my Guru Dakshina to my guru and mentor Dr. K.M. Munshi and to his own Guru, Sri Aurobindo. Happily, for us all, the distinguished grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Gopal Krishan Gandhi who presides over the State of West Bengal as its Governor and also heads Sri Aurobindo Bhawan Committee joined us on the happy occasion to unveil the statue. To my regret, we missed the physical presence of my dear and distinguished friend, Dr. Karan Singh (who describes us both culturally as twins, Luv and Kush) at the memorable ceremony of installation and unveiling of the statue, but I felt all the time that despite his physical absence, he was indeed present in spirit and was, as it were, sitting by my side. We had the pleasure of having with us the PWD Minister of West Bengal, Shri Aman Choudhary as well as my much-esteemed friend and colleague in Rajya Sabha, General Shankar Ray Choudhary and the deeply and widely respected scholar of our heritage, Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Govind Gopal Mukhopadhyaya. We are all deeply

in Shri B.P. Bajoria's debt and thankfully appreciate Shri Niranjana Pradhan for the perfect setting for the statue at Sri Aurobindo Bhawan.

My close friend and a founding fellow member of my Committee, Shri Kantilal Dalal came all the way from Canada. Prof. Indranath Choudhary, the Secretary of our Smriti Committee and his wife Professor Usha Choudhary came from Delhi. Shri Lalit Verma who executed and managed the project came especially from Pondichery. The three gifted sculptors from Kolkata were also present. Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, founded by my Guru, Dr. K.M. Munshi, was represented at the ceremony besides me, and more particularly by my friends, Mr. Justice Chittatosh Mukherji, the distinguished grandson of Sir Ashutosh as well as Shri Surendralal Mehta, the distinguished son of Shri Girdharilal Mehta, a great philanthropist and former president of the Bhawan. If I may say so, the 15 August 2005 was, for many of us at Sri Aurobindo Bhawan, a memorable golden and crimson Aurora, the divine dawn of the birth anniversary day of Sri Aurobindo. Bathed in the light and the Malayaj-cool breeze of that divine grace, we were basking in the sunshine of SriAurobindo's and India's dawn with an inner sense of rejoicing and celebration.

It is remarkable that the young Aurobindo Ghosh who was taken to England by his father who was himself 'a tremendous atheist' and who had placed the young Aruobindo with an English clergyman and his wife 'with strict instructions not to be allowed to make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence' became one of the greatest apostles of India and its heritage of many millennia. His father had hoped that his son Aurobindo would make a brilliant administrator and wanted him to become a part of the steel frame of India by joining the Indian Civil Service. He did, however, become a part of an altogether different Steel Frame of India, by not joining the Indian Civil Service, but by being the tensile anchor and the motivating psychic force which began to permeate and pulsate in the heart, the mind and the soul of India.

The young Ghosh took a high place in the first class of the classical Tripos in the second year of his residence at King's College, Cambridge where also I was privileged to put a bust of Sri Aurobindo during my time as India's High Commissioner. After he deliberately disqualified himself from joining the ICS, Shri Aurobindo Ghosh was given an appointment in the service of the Princely State of Baroda where he spent 13 years from 1893 to 1906. At Baroda College, he taught English and finally became its Vice Principal.

During those years in Baroda he learnt, interalia, Sanskrit, Marathi

and Gujarati and taught himself Bengali. The genius that he was, Sri Aurobindo became a great Sanskrit scholar and one of the greatest exponents of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the entire literary and philosophical heritage of India.

It was in Baroda that Sri Aurobindo started his Yoga Sadhana, firstly more or less on his own, and then when he meditated under the guidance of the great Maharashtrian Brahmajnani and Yogi Sri Vishnu Bhaskar Lele when he gained realization of the silent, speechless and transcendent Brahman. Of his experience with Sri Lele, Sri Aurobindo said, "In three days really in one my mind become full of an eternal silence it is still there".

Spiritually awakened, and politically surcharged by profound patriotism and national pride, Sri Aurobindo, disapproved of the Moderates of his time and their pacifist policy of "pray, petition and protest". At Ahmedabad Congress, Lokmanya Tilak took him aside and shared his thoughts with him. At the instance of his editor friend, Sri K.G. Deshpande, Shri Aurobindo wrote for Indu Prakash. Later he edited *Bande Matram* and *Karmayogin*. His writings of that period were a clarion call of freedom, which would herald the end of colonialism. It was the clearest and the earliest proclamation of the goal of complete independence and self-government (Purne Swaraj). His advocacy of no compromise and no cooperation with British colonialism was at that time his strategy and mantra for Swaraj. 'Bande Matram' and the editorials authored by Sri Aurobindo, according to an editor of *The Statesman*, "reeked with sedition patently visible between every line, but it was so skilfully written that no legal action could be taken". The swansong of the great paper *Bande Mataram* was written by one Shri Bejoy Chatterjee when Shri Aurobindo was in jail and which compelled the government to do its worst, which it did. Thus, 'Bande Matram' the fiery forum of nationalism became the martyr in the cause of India's freedom.

After his sojourn in Baroda and return to Calcutta, Sri Aurobindo emerged as the most articulate voice of Indian nationalism at the political level, the philosophical and cultural seeds, of which had been sown by Swami Vivekananda and irrigated by Sri Aurobindo. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose vividly recapitulated the magnetic pull of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in his letters reflecting how India's spiritual regeneration, cultural renaissance and political resurgence created a mighty force. Rajah Rammohan Ray, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo richly represented that mighty force of spiritual regeneration and of cultural and political national resurgence. Sri Aurobindo's life and work is draped in that tricolour flag of culture, spirituality and patriotism of the electrifying and uplifting impact of Swami

Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose wrote thus:

"It was Swami Vivekananda who had on the one hand, boldly asked his fellowmen to shed all sorts of fetters and be 'men' in the truest sense of the term; and, on the other hand, laid the foundation of true nationalism in India by preaching the essential unity of all religions and sects. However, the image of freedom, whole and entire that we come across in Vivekananda, had not yet been reflected in the realm of politics in his age. It was in the mouth of Aurobindo that we heard the message of political freedom for the first time. In addition, when Aurobindo wrote in the columns of his 'Bandemataram' -- 'we want complete autonomy free from British control' -- the freedom-loving Bengalee youth could feel that he had at last got the man of his heart." (Netaji collected works, Vol. VI pp. 11, 201-202).

Sri Aurobindo was married to Smt. Mrinalini Devi in 1901. He described his three 'Madnesses' to Mrinaliniji with disarming directness and conjugal, candour. I would respectfully call those 'three madnesses' the three Graces and missions of the life of the great master. He said of 'those madnesses' in his letter:

I have three madnesses. The first one is this. I firmly believe that the accomplishments, genius, higher education, learning and wealth that God has given me are His. I have a right to spend for my own purposes only what is needed for the maintenance of the family... the rest must be returned to God.

... My second madness has only recently seized me. It is this: by whatever means I must have the direct vision of God If God exists, there must be some way to experience His existence to meet Him face to face. However arduous this path is, I have made up my mind to follow it. The Hindu religion declares that the way lies in one's own body, in one's own mind... Within a month I have realized that what the Hindu religion way is not false. I am experiencing in myself the signs of which it speaks ...

My third madness is that while others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter -- I look upon my country as the Mother. I adore Her, I worship Her as the Mother. What would a son do if a demon sat on his mother's breast and started sucking her blood? Would he quietly sit down to his dinner, amuse himself with his wife and children, or would he rush out to deliver his mother? I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength ... but the strength of knowledge ... this feeling is not new in me, it is not of today. I was born with it, it is in my very marrow. God sent me to earth to accomplish this great mission.

In addition, Sri Aurobindo realized those three objectives to which he

consecrated his Life Divine. He met Vasudev Krishna face to face. He laid the foundation of a mindset through his words and deeds to unshackle Mother India and to make Her free. His Idea of India makes generations of Indians hold their heads high and has made our minds free from fear and servitude.

Those three so-called 'madnesses' or the three graces as I call them provided the confluence sanctity of the Triveni Sangam that was Sri Aurobindo whose life became the sacred convergence of the pure Ganga of Spirituality, the Jamuna of Krishana Consciousness and The Supramental Vasudeva Vision in the quite visible Saraswati of Sri Aurobindo's soulful expression in Poetry, Patriotism, Heritage, Revelation and Prophetic Insight.

The redoubtable C.R. Das referred to Sri Aurobindo while he appeared for him and appealed to the court in the following words, which are etched in stone at the entrance of Sri Aurobindo Bhawan in Kolkata.

"My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar is this Court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this: That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History."

Sri Aurobindo unravelled the secret of the Veda, expounded the meaning of the Upanishads and shared with the world the message of Gita. It was Sri Aurobindo's tryst of destiny to carry forward the work of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda and Lokmanya Tilak on the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita and to make his own seminal and creative contribution on each of them. There is the purity and profundity of revelation and the encyclopedic breadth of scholarship and creativity in Sri Aurobindo's writings on, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, which have rediscovered for India and the future generations of Indians the quintessential substance of India's heritage of Philosophy, Science, Ethics, and the vision of the world.

Writing my Foreword to the 23 volume magnum opus of Veda Pratishthan of which I have the privilege to be the President, I quoted Sri Aurobindo who knew the true and inner secret of the Vedas thus:

"It was the curiosity of a foreign culture that broke after many centuries the seal of final authoritativeness which Sayana had fixed on the ritualistic interpretation of the Veda. The ancient scripture was delivered over to a

scholarship laborious, bold in speculation, ingenious in its flights of fancy, conscientious according its own lights, but ill-fitted to understand the method of old mystic poets; for it was void of any sympathy with that ancient temperament, un-provided with any clue in its own intellectual or spiritual environment to the ideas hidden in the Vedic figures and parables. The result has been doubt character, on the one side the beginning of a more minute, thorough, careful as well as a freer handling of the problems of Vedic interpretation on the other hand, a final exaggeration of its apparent material sense and the complete obscuration of its true and inner secret”.

To me Sri Aurobindo's writings resonated “the chants of the Rigveda as episodes of the lyrical epic of the soul in its immortal ascension.” Sri Aurobindo taught us that Rigveda was truly the high aspiring song of humanity, in which, to adapt the words of the great poet Kalidasa, words and meanings are indivisibly integrated. Profoundly humane and compassionate, untrammelled and emancipated in its universality, deeply spiritual in its mystical depths, sincere and upright in its ethical rectitude, evocative and affirmative in the ardent enjoyment of life and its gifts, spontaneous in its sense of human togetherness, and cosmic in its reach and its worldview, the Vedic literature is undoubtedly humankind's most precious treasure. It is a treasure of the Experience of Reality and the Reality of Experience. We find in the Vedic experience the Nature of Harmony and discover the Harmony of Nature.

We in India cannot be oblivious of the fact that in the nineteenth century, Western Vedic scholarship, though original and erudite, was still, insufficiently aided by deeper and more sensitive exposition of the Vedas and that the Western discovery of the Vedic lore and literature came in an age when unrepentant colonialism and self-opinionated missionary activity were in the ascendant. The traditional indigenous repositories of the Vedic heritage in its Indian homeland were in a state of intellectual decline and social disarray. The Vedic vision was somewhat eclipsed by an ethnic amnesia and isolation of centuries. There was an overpowering sense in the devastation of our identity and dignity and a denuding loss of self-respect and self-confidence. In that state of decay and disillusionment and of penury and paralysis of critical Indian scholarship, Swami Dayanand Saraswati's interpretation of the Vedas came as a breath of fresh air, creating a new ambiance for understanding a new striving of resurgence and a new equation of audacious and unbending independence. Swami Dayananda Saraswati naturally saw the Vedas as an Indian, steeped in that tradition, as a living and universal scripture of mankind containing as Sri Aurobindo put it, “a plenary revelation of religious, ethical and scientific truth.” Sri Aurobindo's poetic, philosophical, mystical and spiritual approach

to Vedas represents the flowering of that rediscovery and renaissance. Western translators and commentators whose contribution to Vedic learning is historically monumental and memorable, but they lacked the sense of the sacred and were often prepossessed by their mistaken notions which regarded Vedic hymns with arrogant condescension as precocious pastoral poetry. They lacked that temperamental empathy to enable them to identify themselves with Vedic culture, which enabled Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Sri Aurobindo to give an integrated interpretation of the social ethos, religious spirit and spiritual values of the Vedas.

It is my view that in the world in which we live today, the Vedas have a uniquely harmonizing relevance. The Vedic vision is neither archaic nor archival. The Vedic heritage proves that the primeval is not primitive and the old is not otiose. The Vedas enshrine an inherited remembrance of the primordial revelations, the inner experience of the sages and seers. Indeed each Vedic hymn is a landmark in the spiritual odyssey of man, celebrating at every step humanity's ceaseless quest for the True, the Good and the Beautiful. The Vedic hymn exudes the glowing awareness of pure consciousness and the elevating effulgence of bliss. The reason for India's and the world's ageless veneration for the Vedas is not mere scriptural authority or some sacerdotal sanctity or an awe for the esoteric and the ancient. We venerate the Vedas not merely because the Vedas are the oldest books known to man; nor because we collect and are connoisseurs of the 'relics of former ages'. There are profounder, more immediate and transcendental reasons. We venerate the Vedas above all because they enshrine the eternal verity of cosmic harmony and the enduring quality of universal humanity, because the Vedas give us a vision beyond Time and beyond artificial, man-made barriers and frontiers, because the Vedas convoke and unite all the elements of terrestrial and transcendental life and proclaim the reign of peace, rule of Rta and the promises enshrined in the eternal and ever-evolving Universal Charter of Justice and Humanity. That is why the message of the Vedas remains a living legacy for every age and for all time. The indestructible spoken word of Vedic seers 'stands untouched by time or the elements' and has continued to travel through countless centuries 'like a great wave through the living substance of mind'. The Vedic Vac gave us the tradition of worship at the threshold of cosmic consciousness on the altar of creativity and self-realization. That is our precious Vedic legacy. To go back to Sri Aurobindo's Rigvedic imagery, the Vedic hymns are like the weaving shuttles of cosmic threads with the great sages, seers and samhitakaras weaving back and forth, extend them and unbend them. To Sri Aurobindo was revealed the Vedic vac with its array of thousands

syllables and thousand postures wherein unified consciousness was manifested in a thousand ways as flame-songs of the earth and the empyrean. Sri Aurobindo found embedded in their innermost recesses the eternal and cosmic power of illumination. He witnessed the Vedic words of yore rising from the depths of creative consciousness in a panoramic vision of innumerable vignettes. In addition, thus he inaugurated a new era and opened myriads of locked doors to the golden treasury of Vedas.

To Sri Aurobindo the Vedic and the Vedantic heritage of Upanishads constituted an integral continuum. Referring to the rich and ample Vedic anterior, which provided the foundation for and entrance into the magnificent splendours of Vedanta, Sri Aurobindo says.

“Such profound and ultimate thoughts, such systems of subtle and elaborate psychology as are found in the substance of the Upanishads, do not spring out of a previous void. The human mind in its progress marches from knowledge to knowledge, or it renews and enlarges previous knowledge that has been obscured and overlaid, or it seizes on old imperfect clues and is led by them to new discoveries. The thought of the Upanishads supposes great origins anterior to itself...”

While paying a tempered tribute to Professor Max Muller, Sri Aurobindo did not fail to point out that Max Muller was more of a grammarian and a philologist than a sound Sanskrit scholar and that “he could not feel the language or realize the spirit behind the letter Accordingly he (Max Muller) committed two serious errors of judgment; he imagined that by sitting in Oxford and evolving new meanings out of his own brilliant fancy he could understand the Upanishads better than Shankaracharya or any other Hindu of parts and learning; and he also imagined that what was important for Europe to know about the Upanishads was what he and other European scholars considered they ought to mean ...”

In that context, Sri Aurobindo then made a sharp and frontal comment:

“Professor Max Muller in his translation did not make any attempt to render into English the precise shades of Aryan philosophical terms like Atman and Prana which do not correspond to any philosophical conception familiar to the West; he believed that the very unfamiliarity of the terms he used, to translate them, would be like a bracing splash of cold water to the mind forcing it to rouse itself and think. In this, I think the professor was in error; his proposition may be true of undaunted philosophical intellects such as Schopenhauer’s or of those who are already somewhat familiar with the Sanskrit language, but to the ordinary reader the unfamiliar and unexplained terminology forms

a high and thick hedge of brambles shutting him off from the noble palace and beautiful gardens of the Upanishads. Moreover, the result of a scholastic faithfulness to the letter has been to make the style of the translation intolerably uncouth and unworthy of these great religious poems."

Sri Aurobindo's study of the Vedas and the Upanishads led him to 'the idea of transcendental unity, oneness and stability' behind all the flux and variety of phenomenal life and that he found to be the pivot of all Indian metaphysics. That idea of transcendental unity, oneness and stability enabled the ancient seers of India through yoga to realize four great truths:

1. Nityanityanam, the one eternal in many transient;
2. Cetanascetam, the one consciousness in many consciousnesses;
3. So'ham; and
4. Aham brahmasmi.

These four truths were the four steps to full self-realization in Sri Aurobindo's yogic yatra in his Life Divine. Sri Aurobindo traced the Upanishadic quest of antiquity to the method of which Kapila, the ancient prehistoric Master of Thought called Sankhya or the law of Enumeration and Generalization which led the Rishis of yore to the ultimate Truths-in-Things (the Tattwas or literally That-nesses). Thus in the Ultimate, the immediate were merely as aspects. The Sankhya thus arrived at the great principle of Sri Aurobindo "The single eternal indestructible principle and origin of Matter which by perpetual evolution rolls out through aeons and aeons the unending panorama of things."

A more vivid social and insightful exposition of Sankhya would be difficult to find. It is well to remember that Sankhya is the crucible of Vedic Vedanta, Sramana Vedanta and the Vedanta of Gita. Sri Aurobindo takes us from the Science of Sankhya to the Transcendence of Spirituality based on the four fundamental truths he encapsulated in the following words which come to us as a revelation from the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Aurobindo's meditation: "The seers of ancient India had, in their experiments and efforts at spiritual training and the conquest of the body, perfected a discovery which in its importance to the future of human knowledge dwarfs the divinations of Newton and Galileo; even the discovery of the inductive and experimental method in science was not more momentous; for they discovered down to its ultimate processes the method of Yoga and by the method of Yoga they rose to three crowning realizations. They realized first as a fact the existence under the flux and multitudinousness of things of that supreme unity and immutable stability which had hitherto been posited only as a necessary theory, an inevitable generalization. They came to know that it is the one Reality

and all phenomena merely its seemings and appearances, that it is the true Self of all things and phenomena are merely its clothes and trappings. They learned that it is absolute and transcendent and, because absolute and transcendent, therefore eternal, immutable, imminuable and indivisible. In addition, looking back on the past progress of speculation they perceived that this also was the goal to which pure intellectual reasoning would have led them. For that which is in time must be born and perish; but the Unity and Stability of things is eternal and must, therefore, transcend Time. That which is in Space must increase and diminish, have parts and elations, but the Unity and Stability of things is immensurable, not augmentable, independent of the changefulness of its parts and untouched by the shifting of their relations, and must therefore transcend Space; -- and if it transcends Space cannot really have parts, since Space is the condition of material divisibility; divisibility therefore must be, like death, a seeing and not a reality. Finally that which is subject to Causality, is necessarily subject to Change but the Unity and Stability of things is immutable, the same now as it was aeons ago and will be aeons hereafter and must therefore transcends Causality."

The Upanishads, 'so sweet, strange and sublime a miracle' showered their bounties of intuitive spirit in their original primordial feel. Gita was handed over to him by Krishna Vasudev, whose Arjun the human disciple, Sri Aurobindo was. Arjun received his initiation and instruction on the battlefield. So did Sri Aurobindo as we find from Sri Aurobindo's Uttarpara speech. Sri Aurobindo traced the image of Arjun in the chariot with the divine Krishna as his charioteer soul and the divine riding in one chariot through a great battle to the goal of high aspiring efforts. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"To such a disciple the Teacher of the Gita gives his divine teaching. He seizes him at a moment of his psychological development by egoistic action when all the mental, moral, emotional values of the ordinary egoistic and social life of man have collapsed in a sudden bankruptcy, and he has to lift him up out of this lower life into a higher consciousness, out of ignorant attachment to action into that which transcends, yet originates and orders action, out of ego into Self, out of life in mind, vitality and body into that higher nature beyond mind which is the status of the Divine. He has at the same time to give him that for which he asks and for which he is inspired to seek by the guidance within him, a new Law of life and action high above the insufficient rule of the ordinary human existence with its endless conflicts and oppositions, perplexities and illusory certainties, a higher Law by which the soul shall be free from this bondage of works and yet powerful to act and conquer in the vast liberty of its divine being. For the action must be

performed, the world must fulfil its cycles and they should of the human being must not turn back in ignorance from the work it is here to do. The whole course of the teaching of the Gita is determined and directed, even in its widest wheeling, towards the fulfilment of these three objects.

Explaining the Avatarvada in the Indian tradition, Sri Aurobindo expounds the Vaishnava form of Vedantism through the double figure concept of Nara-Narayan, which annotates and illumines the relation of God in man and man in God. Summing up the core of the teachings in Gita, Sri Aurobindo gives us an authentic narrative of the steps and routes in his inspired pilgrimage of life and his tryst with the ultimate communion with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine nature:

“The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita’s insistence is action. The second is Jnana-yoga, the self-realization and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalized and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the way of knowledge, works and devotion. In addition, the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit still placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature.”

In Sri Aurobindo’s life was resurrected the vital essence of Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga and through him the spirit of yoga came alive and was given back to us as his legacy of love for the heritage of India. We feel fulfilled in our salutations of grateful reverence to Sri Aurobindo who came to us as the reincarnate spirit of our Rishis.

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Mouni Baba

I am pleased, in my personal as distinct from my official capacity, to write this reference for Mr. T.K. Krishnan, otherwise known as Baba or Mauni Baba (Teacher or Apostle of Silence), who is highly regarded in India and in many other countries of the world as a man of spirituality. He is acknowledged as a master of the therapeutics of silence. He is venerated by many as an example of an eminent practitioner of the religious and spiritual traditions of India and as an exponent of the crucial significance of meditation and silence as a sanctuary of tranquility.

Mr. T.K. Krishnan, generally known as Baba (a word of veneration), enjoys a high reputation in India and is spoken of as a man of deep spirituality. He is known to be a man of high character, sincerity and kindness and as a man of humanity and goodness. On the basis of what I have read and heard about him from the most highly esteemed sources, and of my own limited acquaintance with him, I have formed a high opinion of his selfless and philanthropic disposition, detached and humane character and his mastery of meditative silence.

Baba has observed his vow of silence for more than three decades, since 1962. According to him (and his views are sanctified by many millennia of Indian tradition): "God cannot be discussed and argued about. God is to be realized in silence.... In deep silence, God ceases to be an object but becomes an experience.... The present-day human life is built on the ruins of silence. All the misery and unhappiness of man is because the silence in man has exploded."

In seeking to convey why Baba is held in such regard by so many in India and elsewhere, I feel I can do no better than to quote from India's leading national daily, The Hindu, which published a homage to Mauni Baba

in June 1973 under the caption 'The Shrine of Silence':

"Quietly, without much fanfare, a unique shrine has come up in a small village near Chervathur in Cannanore district in the northernmost part of Kerala. The shrine has nothing to do with the existing religions; there are no rituals in the temple and no worship is offered. It has been given a name, 'Shantidham' abode of Inner Stillness. The temple itself is dedicated to Silence.

"The Shrine located on a hillock, was the ideal and dream of the 43-year old Sri Krishnaji who has come to be known among friends as Mouni Baba. The work on the shrine was slow and spread over a long period. It was completed in 1970 after Mouni Baba had carried his dream for 22 years. The dream, which has been realized is a cave on the slope of the hillock in the 40 acre land belonging to Mouni Baba, his parents and his close friends and is nearly 100 feet deep, the tapering inside completely covered with white marble. There is a modern facade with a big door and window at the entrance of the cave. At the innermost portion of the cave on the wall at eye level, is fixed a flawless 280-carat golden topaz, which spreads a light glow when the door is closed and absolute silence descends inside.

"The shrine has been built for the personal use of Mouni Baba. However, he allows it to be used by friends to realize the blessedness of silence he insists he has no disciples and the latest user of Shantidham was the former Union Minister, Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, who spent a week there and observed a vow of silence.

"A small statue of Buddha is placed immediately inside the entrance of the cave. "Buddha also sat in silence and got enlightenment. It is symbolic of silence. I felt that the statue will politely remind one to sit quiet. Therefore, it is at the entrance. However, it is not being worshipped as an image," says Mouni Baba who has not spoken since February 1962. He communicates with visitors and others whenever necessary through writing for which he keeps paper and writing materials nearby."

I might mention that Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda as one of Baba's followers in silence was a senior Federal Cabinet Minister in the Government of India and was twice Prime Minister of India for brief periods. There are many others in the forefront of India's national life, who respect Baba in the same way.

A highly talented and widely acknowledged contemporary Western artist, Audrey Flack met Baba in 1977-80 and was deeply moved by his 'powerful spiritual presence and humanity'. Flack decided to paint Baba and began the painting on a seven-by-thirteen foot canvas in 1980 and completed it in 1983. It has been described as "a monumental seascape with an atmosphere

of peace and calm, at the heart of which is Baba's face, an equivalent of a Byzantine icon of deep spiritual significance". Preparing a composition of still lives in 1981-82, Flack included around the image of Baba a likeness of Albert Einstein, a small devotional statue of Christ, a candlestick with the star of David and a silver devotional diptych, all in a rainbow of spiritual light, seeking to convey the message of essential underlying unity of different traditions of faith. The testimony of Flack's abiding tribute to Baba's spiritual impact is found in Flack's two remarkable books, *Breaking the Rules: Audrey Flack, A Retrospective 1950-90* and Flack's own *Art & Soul, Notes on Creation*.

There is a great deal more I could say but I think it is hardly necessary. I am extremely sorry to hear about the jury verdict against him. However, I can say nothing about it. As one who has spent a lifetime in the law, and considering the risks of cultural and other communication gaps, I can only emphasize Mr. Krishnan's reputation of unblemished life and the great esteem in which he is held in India and among persons of different nationalities and faiths as grounds for a more favourable understanding of his character.

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Shriyut Mukut Behari Lal Bhargava: A Living Legend

Shriyut Mukut Behari Lal Bhargava is a living legend among lawyers in Rajasthan. He stands for all that we cherish in the traditions of the Bar. The Rajasthan Bar has reason to be truly proud of him.

Pandit Mukut Behari Lal Bhargava represents a synthesis of pulsating public concern, wide ranging awareness of men and matters and professional skill and acumen of a high order. He was an elected member of India's Constituent Assembly and helped to establish the foundations of constitutional norms. As a Member of Parliament, as a public worker and as a lawyer, he has brought to bear upon his work the moral values of the Gandhian era and an implicit commitment to the rule of law.

Pandit Mukut Behari Lal Bhargava has a phenomenal memory. Despite his visual disability, he is able to wade through complicated case law with an effortless ease. To hear him propounding propositions of law fully fortified by punctilious references to the provisions of law and pages, paragraphs and columns in the reports, is an experience. I have had the privilege of appearing in a number of important cases in which he appeared on the opposite side, and I cannot recall a single occasion when I could fault him on the facts of the case. He is a formidable adversary. To be pitted against him is stimulating and challenging. I have always admired his firm grasp of first principles and his able exposition of law. He marshals his arguments with relentless logic. He builds up his arguments like an engineer and an architect. He is careful about the bricks and mortar of the legal and factual materials, he uses; at the same time he is conscious of the architectural design of his arguments. He is articulate and forceful, lucid and systematic. Behind the impressive array of his arguments is a well-stocked armoury of case law. He puts his case with

conviction and invariably makes an impact not only on the judge but also on the opposite side.

Pandit Mukut Behari Lal Bhargava has contributed in a substantial measure to the growth and development of law by arguing on one or the other side in many important and landmark cases. On whichever side he appears, his analysis is always perceptive, his comments always forceful, and his words always weighty. One could often disagree with him, for that is a part of the game; but what he says can never be ignored or side-tracked or soft-pedalled. Moreover, he is a tenacious and resourceful counsel. Once he takes a stand, he sticks to it even when it runs into rough weather either at the hands of his adversary or at the hands of the judges. He always does his best for his client and leaves no stone unturned. Occasionally, he might use strong language and there might appear to be some fireworks. However, there is no ill-will or rancour in those passages at arms, battle cries or sabre-rattling.

In a fundamental sense, his advocacy, his knowledge and his forensic skill are a source of strength and inspiration to the Bar and it is proper that the legal profession in Rajasthan should pay its affectionate tribute to him on the happy occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his eventful legal career. He is an acknowledged and front rank leader of the Bar in Rajasthan and his example would always enliven and enrich the commitment and the capacity of the legal profession to adhere to the ideals and the ethos of its noble calling.

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Jawaharlal Nehru: Sagacity and Vision on India

I am grateful to the Bhavan for taking the trouble of publishing my speech on Mahatma Gandhi in the form of a monograph. Many kind words have been said about my talk. I am particularly grateful for the kind words of Lord Fenner Brockway and for his gracious presence in our midst this evening. Maneckji and Krishnamurti have always been uncritical admirers of my speeches. I can only say that I am deeply touched by their kindness.

Today we are remembering one of the great builders of our nation Jawaharlal Nehru. It was the singular good fortune of India that we had at the helm of affairs in the formative years of our country's independence a person of such sterling qualities -- a man of extraordinary brilliance and intellectual depth but tempered by great humility and humaneness, a fierce nationalist of intense patriotism, but always with a wide vision of the world, a charismatic leader adored by masses, but who kept his head cool and never allowed himself to be swept of his feet by the adulation of the millions, a man of integrity and character and dauntless courage the like of which few nations and few ages have produced. The most eloquent tribute ever paid to Jawaharlal Nehru was by his great mentor and Master Mahatma Gandhi. He said, "Jawaharlal is a jewel among men. He is capable of mounting the gallows with a smile on his face." This in one sentence sums up the character and personality of Jawaharlal Nehru -- a man of unrivalled excellence in the true sense of the word, a man of indomitable courage and dignity.

It is difficult to recount Jawaharlal Nehru's services to his country in a short talk of a few minutes. However, some of his outstanding contributions to India and the world stand out as conspicuous peaks in the saga of India's struggle for development and progress and I should only make a brief mention

of them. They are (1) building the great institutions of democracy in India, (2) formulating and articulating the concept of non-alignment and leading the nation to the goals of secularism and socialism. To Jawaharlal Nehru democracy was an article of faith on which there could be no compromise or dilution. All through the freedom struggle, he had considered India's freedom as part of the struggle for freedom and democracy for people everywhere and that was why long before India's Independence he had raised his powerful voice against fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany and supported the struggle against Franco in Spain. When he got the opportunity to be master in his own house, he assiduously nursed the group of the institutions of democracy in India – free elections, independent judiciary, free press, non-political armed forces and civil services on merits and thus built up our democratic republic as the secure foundation of people's will. Many developing countries that started their canon as democracies soon ended up with monstrous variations and perversions, which disproved the basic concept of democracy. That is why we see presidents for life and presidents wielding power on the strength of bullets rather than ballots. Over a period of 17 years, Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister. He built the edifice of democracy brick by brick, with great commitment and zeal and that is why India today can boast of being the largest functioning democracy in the world.

Jawaharlal Nehru had the sagacity and vision to know that non-alignment was necessary if newly independent countries were to preserve their sovereignty. He stood out boldly for non-alignment in an age when the icy winds of the cold war were sweeping across the continent and nations were told that they had to choose between either of the contending blocs if they are to survive. Nehru with uncanny foresight and political vision realized that the hard-won independence of his country and of other developing countries would get diluted if they were to align with either bloc and projected the concept of non-alignment as a shield for defending the sovereignty of newly independent nations. Today over 100 countries have accepted this concept.

His commitment to secularism and socialism was a true reflection of his own personality absolutely free from petty prejudices of caste, community, religion or language and always mindful about the gross inequalities and injustices in our society.

In honouring the memory of such a great man we are only expressing our gratitude for what he has been to our country and what he still means to us.



Homage to Chief Justice Mahajan

I consider it a great privilege to be invited to deliver this commemorative centennial lecture as my humble homage to the memory of the late Shri Mehr Chand Mahajan. An illustrious son of India, he adorned many important positions of great responsibility and rose to be the third Chief Justice of India. A great patriot, statesman and judge, he was a truly great citizen, a great educationist and a great social worker and reformer. In his days of retirement, he provided dynamic leadership to DAV movement and served a galaxy of good causes.

If I start on a personal note, I would recall not only the folklore about his formidable and phenomenal memory and occasionally his brusque and devastating manner of dealing with the members of the bar, but also his many kindnesses, his generosity of disposition and his charming hospitality. Indeed, I vividly recall that I was quite intimidated at the prospect of arguing as the leading counsel for the State of Maharashtra a very heavy and complicated brief before him as the Commission on Maharashtra Mysore Boundary Dispute. I had myself witnessed a somewhat sharp and windy rattling of words between the One Man Commission and my distinguished predecessor counsel when he was arguing the Belgaum part of the dispute. It was at that point of time that the then Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, the late Mr. Pradhan, offered me the main Maharashtra brief. Apart from the fact that I could not afford to decline the highly prestigious brief, I was not prepared to acknowledge a timorous chink in the professional armour of my polite but valorous disposition after my long number of years at the bar and an active and high profile term of five years in the third Lok Sabha as the spokesmen of a large and distinguished group of independent Members of Parliament. It happened, however, that there was no rough weather on the high seas and I, as the

counsel for the State of Maharashtra, had cheerful and smooth sailing all along. Everyone, including the highly respected Mr. K.L. Misra from Allahabad who appeared for the Maharashtra Samiti and Mr. Nambiar who appeared for Karnataka, attributed it in their generosity to my advocacy, though I knew that it was, perhaps, much more a piece of sheer good fortune.

During the Commission hearings at Otacamund, Mr. Mahajan invited me and my wife on a number of occasions and treaded us with paternal affection and overwhelming hospitality. At one of those cozy afternoon tea parties with him, I had the privilege of hearing from himself the story of how his birth on 23 December 1889 was considered deadly inauspicious by the astrologers and how he was banished to a thatched hamlet in a neighbouring village to be raised by a peasant Rajput family. He recalled the incident with good humour and waxed eloquent about some of his impish adventures. He laughed heartily with approval when I said that he probably got his robust common sense and humanity from that childhood experience in a poor peasant homestead. He interjected and added with unmixed pleasure, "That is where I got my simple Indian rusticity".

Mr. Mehr Chand Mahajan started his practice of law at Gurdaspur, a few months before the First World War broke out. From the District Court in Gurdaspur, where he had a lucrative practice for five years, he shifted to the Chief Court in Lahore in October 1918. On the 1st of April 1919 the High Court of Lahore was inaugurated. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lt Governor of Punjab, presided over the ceremony and administered the oath of office to Sir Henry Rattigan who was the first Chief Justice in his autobiography. Mr. Mahajan notes the event and observes: "It is a sad commentary on the Punjab Bench and the Bar that whereas the Chief Justice of Patna High Court had refused to allow the Lt. Governor of Bihar to perform the opening ceremony of the High Court, here the Lt. Governor not only presided at the functions, but used it to proclaim the higher status of the Executive in Punjab."

In 1922 he taught as a part-time lecturer in the Law College, Lahore, in the company of many distinguished lawyers of the Punjab, including Lala Jagannath Aggarwal, Mr. Mohammad Zafrullah, Pandit Nanak Chand and Mr. Mohammad Munir. He taught in the Law College for about 9 years, lecturing on the Law of Contracts and Torts and the Civil Procedure Code. He had a large and affluent clientele. He was a successfully lawyer and appeared in many celebrated causes of his time. He was known as an astute and a fearless lawyer. He used to tell us how the bar in the Punjab braved the excesses of Sir Douglas Young who succeeded Sir Shadi Lal as Chief Justice

of the Lahore High Court.

In 1935, Mr. Mahajan argued the well-known Tribune Trust income-tax case. His contention was that the profits earned by the sale of the Tribune were not liable to tax, as the paper had been started by a charitable trust by its founder Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia. The Revenue's claim was that these were business profits and were liable to income tax. The question was riveted on the definition of the word 'Charitable Purpose' as defined in the Indian Income-Tax Act. The Full Bench decided the case against the Tribune Trust by a majority of 2 to 1. The Trustees of the Tribune Trust took the matter to the Privy Council and Mr. Mahajan's elaborate and lucid note on the case proved an invaluable aid to the counsel of the Tribune Trust before the Privy Council. The Full Bench judgment, and particularly the minority judgment in favour of the Tribune Trust, as well as the Privy Council judgment, which reversed the majority of Lahore High Court, stand out for their contribution to the development of law.

One of the most notable cases in which Mr. Mahajan appeared during the Second World War was the case of the Lahore Electricity Company, in which he challenged an order made by the Government of Sir Sikander Hayat Khan under its emergency power to acquire the company. Mr. Mahajan argued that the action of the Government was an abuse of power and the order of acquisition was malafide. In that suit, the Bench consisting of Sir Douglas Young, C.J., Monroe and Muhammad Munir J.J. accepted the plea advanced by Mr. Mahajan (AIR 1943 Lahore 41). The unanimous judgment of the Full Bench was a triumph of Mr. Mahajan's erudition and powerful advocacy and remains a landmark to this day.

In January 1943, Sir Trevor Harris took over as Chief Justice of Lahore High Court. Mr. Mahajan was the President of the Bar Association at that time. Having refused the offer of judgeship on a number of occasions earlier he was finally persuaded by Sir Trevor Harris to accept it even though Mr. Mahajan was already 53 years of age, he was at the peak of this law practice at that time. The age of retirement was only 60 and there was going to be substantial financial loss to him.

Mr. Mahajan served as a Member of the Radcliffe Commission. As a member of that commission he was surprised to note that Hindu and Muslim members never met together for consultation that Mr. Justice Deen Mohamad quite frankly told him at the outset that and Pakistan was along the river Ravi. He was strongly so far as he was concerned he would write the report accepting the demands of the Muslim League irrespective of the merits. Mr. Mahajan held the view that the natural boundary between India and Pakistan

was along the river Ravi. He was strongly of the view that Lahore should remain in India, but when he said that, Lord Radcliffe exclaimed "How can you have both Calcutta and Lahore: What can I give to Pakistan?" As a Member of the Radcliffe Commission, he was however, able to ensure that the district of Gurdaspur (except for one Tehsil) would fall to India's share.

Among the important offices he held during the tumultuous period was office of the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir from October 1947 for a brief but momentously eventful span. He himself barely escaped being taken a prisoner. He played a pivotal role in foiling the Pakistan attempt to take Kashmir by force and in Securing Kashmir's accession to India. For a very short period, he also served as Constitutional Adviser to the Maharaja of Bikaner. On 1 October 1948, he took oath of office as a Judge of the Federal Court and retired as Chief Justice of India on 23 December 1954. It is a little known fact, and it provides, perhaps, interesting footnote that the Judge who sat on and presided over the apex court and defended end upheld the Constitution fearlessly and with deep devotion was scathingly and unsparingly critical of the draft Constitution. During the period he served in Bikaner as Constitutional Adviser, Mr. Mahajan went to the extent of publishing an article in the *Hindustan Times* (1948) that the draft Constitution was a slavish copy of the 1935 Act and of certain foreign Constitutions. He thought that the Constitution should be framed "according to the genius of its own people." He advocated a simple unitary Constitution, a legislature elected by indirect franchise by provincial panchayats, which in turn were to be elected by district and village panchayats. He wanted the Indian Constitution to be 'homespun without a skein of British yarn or dye' and 'as shudh as Khadi'. Talking to him about these views and his pet idea of abolishing the autonomous States and reorganizing India as a unitary republic, I felt that these ideas came from the depth of his transparent patriotism, even though I always thought that for a person as realistic as Mr. Mahajan, it was strange not to appreciate how generally unacceptable they were. However, that did not deter him. In fairness to him and even though I do not all share his idea of scrapping the Federal Constitution, I would like to quote a few extracts from the forthright letter he wrote to the Prime Minister in 1956 to underline his concern for the unity and safety of India, says Mr. Mahajan:

"From my tours throughout the length and breadth of Bharat I have reached the conclusion that there is a clear unity of culture and ideas amongst the people of the country irrespective of the territory they live in, but there is one aspect of its political life that makes me unhappy and that is its political disunity. Groups, factions, parties and individuals hungry for power, anxious

to rule over other people are found in abundance everywhere. They fight on nothings. Even jealousies and rivalries and the spirit to rule over their fellow beings is predominate, and selfish desire for personal advancement is in the forefront under guise of service to the country.... Andhra for Andhras, Bengal for Bengalees, and Bihar for Biharis and so on is the cry. This tendency in spite of our strong disapproval is gaining ground. In the South there is a separatist movement. My fear is that after you, the country would be disunited and India will go back to Mahabharat and Pre-Mahabharat period. Whatever little knowledge I have of Indian History, our country has always been split up into small States and Sub-divided amongst Rajas and Maharajas of all kinds and they always fought for supremacy by performing yagnas of different varieties. Asoka and Akbar tried to consolidate the country under one rule, but it again went to pieces after their disappearance. India has never been so united as it is today under your and late Sardar's guidance and efforts. For the first time in history the Indian flag flies from Himalaya to the Cape. You have achieved this great ideal of Bharat as a united country, but the problem is 'will it remain so after you, and Rashrapati?' Sardar Patel and many other leaders of Bharat are no more in the land of the living. I visualize a sad state of affairs after you (I wish I am wrong), from what I see of the politicians in the different States, the narrow provincialism they exhibit and when I see their separatist tendencies and the communal and caste outlook and their hunger for power. I request you to provide safeguards in the Constitution so that India may not go to pieces again. At present the only safeguard is 'President's rule' or unity of the Army, but that might well lead to dictatorship or military rule after those who made the democratic Constitution are gone.

I suggest a drastic change in the Constitution with a view to have a united India for all future times. My suggestion is to scrap the Federal Constitution and make it a unitary system of Government. I mean one Parliament for India, one Ministry in the Centres and abolition of all State Legislatures and State Ministries, the States to be merely administrative units, to be governed by Governors with the help of advisory bodies."

So go back to his judicial careers. When Mr. Justice Mahajan was appointed to the Federal Court, in the wake of the abolition of the Privy Council Jurisdiction and the consequent transfer of pending appeals to the Federal Court, it did not create a congestion in the Court calendar. Those were leisurely times. The Court had a vacation for about four months and set only now and then, rather than five full days a week, as it does now. When the Constitution was enacted and the Special Leave Jurisdiction was

created, Mr. Mahajan and his colleague on the Bench felt as if the Court was flooded with special leave petitions. He noted with amazement that one day he disposed of about a dozen of them. By today's standards, a dozen special leave petitions is only a tiny trickle. Every Monday, eight or nine benches of the Supreme Court now dispose of 500 or so.

Homage to a Judge is incomplete without a reference to his judicial pronouncements. However, constraints of time do not permit me to engage in a full-fledged survey, analysis and evaluation of Mr. Justice Mahajan's judicial work. Suffice it to say that he showed great solicitude for individual rights and fundamental freedoms including civil, political and property rights but tended to accord particular respect to the claims of security and public order and property rights. Many of his judgments are brilliant and outstanding and are models of clarity. His judgments deserve the homage and the understanding of the posterity for their forthrightness, for their realism, for their firm grasp of principles, for their cogency and logic and for their fundamental sense of 'constitutionalism' without any hyper technical or hairsplitting legalism. On the bench, he compelled respect for his thoroughness and complete mastery of the record as well as for this power of unravelling the truly significant elements of the case. He was a man with a strong personality and a vigorous and keen intellect and therefore his impact on the Bench was visible and large. Mr. Justice Bijan Kumar Mukherjee who took oath of office as a Judge of the Federal Court on the same day as Mr. Justice Mahajan and who succeeded him as Chief Justice of India drew a thumbnail picture of his brother judge, which cannot be improved upon. Said Mr. Justice Mukherjee:

"Himself, a hard working man in a remarkable degree, Justice Mahajan had never any patience with the lazy and the pusillanimous in the legal profession and to them his utterances were seldom delectable. He is a firm believer in the freedom of thought and expression enshrined in our Constitution and he wants the judiciary to have the full measure of this freedom. That is why while hearing a case he would not maintain any degree of aloofness from the fight in which the legal combatants were engaged. He would throw himself into it with all the warmth and ardour of a fighter and give free expression to his views not merely on the merits of the case but about all men and things that might be in any way connected with it. His interjections were often too strong for junior members of the profession."

Justice Mukherjee paid a touching tribute to Justice Mahajan in the following words:

"... nobody was more mindful than Mr. Justice Mahajan of the supreme importance of maintaining the rightful place of this court as the guardian of

the liberties of the people and dispenser of equal justice to all. His one anxiety was to see that the banner of this Court continues to be held aloft and not lowered before any power or temptation. He never regarded law as a printed finality with an unvarying content, nor administration of justice a mere mechanical process. Law was to him, as it should be to every Judge, a human and a social institution, a means to achieve social ends and not an end by itself. This human element always loomed large in his pronouncements as Judge.”

Chief Justice Mahajan died full of years, honours and achievements, deeply loved and deeply mourned. In paying our centennial homage to him, we pay our homage to those sterling virtues and qualities which he personified and the everlasting contribution he made to law, constitution and constitutionalism.

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Dr. Radhakrishnan and Indian Constitution

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan came to opt for the study of philosophy quite fortuitously. When he was a young student of seventeen in the Madras Christian College, and was vacillating about the choice of the subject, a cousin of his who took his degree that year, passed on his textbooks in philosophy to him and that is simply what decided his future interests. There was destiny in that coincidence which made him the philosopher-laureate of India. However, philosophers have had no inherent claims to be 'kings' or rulers except in Plato's Republic. However, in the Republic of India Radhakrishnan rose to be Vice-President and President of India and was highly regarded as an elder statesman.

Radhakrishnan was by common consent a remarkable teacher, a profound scholar, an extraordinary exponent, an exceptional diplomat and a great statesman, but he was first and foremost a philosopher and a savant. In the world of diplomacy and politics, his intellectual effulgence and philosophical world view endowed him with a unique stature because as a philosopher, he had recaptured and articulated the resurgent message of India's renaissance and had creatively synthesized diverse elements of tradition and modernity and of the East and the West.

I think it is quite remarkable that Radhakrishnan retained his mantle of quintessential teacher, interpreter, mentor and philosopher even in the rough and tumble of public life. It would not be indulging in any wistful escapist and romanticizing of the past to recall and revel in the glory of those halcyon days in our national life when men and women of outstanding qualities were invited to contribute their mite to the commonweal in a larger spirit of public service. Happily, patriotism and national politics had not yet become exclusive

preserves of partisanship. That Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan should have been a member of the Constituent Assembly or India from the Province of Uttar Pradesh, that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should have asked him to go to the USSR as India's Ambassador, that he should have been chosen as the nominee of the Congress Party first for the office of Vice-President of India and then for the highest office of the head of the Indian Republic without ever having been a member of the party appear today to be episodes of a bygone era. I remember how as an independent member of the Lok Sabha, I felt elated and honoured, as did others, irrespective of their party political affiliations, to be constituents and voters of a candidate of the towering eminence of Dr. Radhakrishnan who, left to himself, was temperamentally quite incapable of entering the electoral arena to seek any public office.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's route to public life was paved by his own mix of renaissance ideas, which he fashioned into a mosaic. He threaded and wove into that mosaic the inspiration he drew from Swami Vivekanand, Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Ashutosh Mukharji, Mahatma Gandhi, Mahanmana Madan Mohan Malviya and the concordance he established with Jawaharlal Nehru. His contribution to the renaissance process of recovering, recapturing and reformulating India's ancient heritage and recasting it in larger, more modern, universal and secular terms made him a preeminent friend, philosopher and guide of new India's democratic and republican social justice ethos.

Radhakrishnan contributed in his own way to the coherence of our constitutional philosophy and to the norms of parliamentary culture by building bridges between the past, the present and the future through a process of creative synthesis and assimilation. A profound patriot and teacher by temperament and a humane intellectual of international repute. Dr. Radhakrishnan's role as a statesman was cut out for him his broad life-long concerns and contribution. Seeming contradictions in his career were dissolved and resolved by him with edifying equanimity, rare detachment and unobtrusive but unyielding self-respect. That is why it did not seem incongruous that a man who was knighted by the Raj should be elected to the highest offices in the gift of our Republic. For he had, for many decades, consistently propounded and expounded the Indian renaissance ideology of pride in India's spiritual and cultural heritage, of the universal humanism of Vedanta, of the essential oneness of all religions, of the secular and spiritual brotherhood of all communities, of the composite unity of India and of the ethics of democracy, freedom and human dignity. His renaissance philosophy and the constitutional ideology of independent India had much in common. Hearing him and reading him in those days, before and after the advent of

our independence, was a profound experience, intellectually stimulating and integrating, emotionally invigorating, and spiritually refreshing.

Radhakrishnan gave thoughtful and meaningful authenticity to the visions and dreams of our nascent Republic and helped to integrate the ancient and the recent past with the immediate future as well as the long-term perspectives. He adopted and reiterated a good deal of the Nehruvian set of ideas but he also provided an eloquent reinforcement of validation with the logistics at an authoritative restatement of continuous and composite Indian traditions. Philosophy, religion, culture, and history thus became welcome tributaries to the new mainstream of our republican culture. Radhakrishnan made a significant contribution in building bridges between trackless centuries of the past and the embattled realities of the present and in imparting consistency, coherence and credibility to the value system of our democratic republic in a holistic perspective. No wonder that, in later years we would give Radhakrishnan the appellation of 'Rajguru'.

It was during the sowing season of our democracy and the early years of our Republic that Dr. Radhakrishnan had a rare opportunity to plant and nurture his renaissance ideas. He made a quantitatively small but qualitatively significant contribution to Constitution making. Those ideas helped to fashion and legitimize the Constitution as a document of the Indian people. Those were the ideas to which he returned repeatedly as Vice-President and as President in his public speeches. His contribution to the making of the Constitution and to the sustaining of its values and its institutional balance shows that our Constitution is a great deal more than a mere legal document. That is why students at constitutional law and political institutions must hark back to Radhakrishnan and other founding fathers if they are not to lose the vision underlying the Constitution.

Radhakrishnan put forth his vision at the Constitution in two profoundly significant speeches he made in the first phase of the Constituent Assembly, on 11 December 1946 and on 20 January 1947. His first speech was to congratulate Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his unanimous and unopposed election as the permanent Chairman of the Constituent Assembly. After Acharya Kripalani and Maulana Azad had escorted Rajenbabu to the dais, the erudite and elderly Chairman, Dr. A. Sachchidanand Sinha called upon Sir S. Radhakrishnan to be the first speaker on that occasion, a measure of his pre-eminence and the high esteem in which he was held in the Assembly. Deploring the abstention of the Muslim League from the Constituent Assembly, he added gently, "We have been kept apart. It is our duty now to find each other." He stressed the common problems of the Indian people and observed:

“Take the problems from which we suffer— our hunger, our poverty, our disease, our malnutrition these are common to all. Take the psychological evils from which we suffer the loss of human dignity, the slavery of the mind, the stunting of sensibility and the shame of subjection, these are common to all: Hindus or Muslims, princes or peasants. The chains may be made of gold but they are still chains that fetter us.”

Sounding the keynote of Indian tradition, he recalled the edict of the great disciple of Lord Buddha, Emperor Ashok, who had said, “Samanvaya eva Sadhuh.” (Concord is ideal) Defining the nature and the texture of the Constitution and encapsulating its essentials, he said:

“A Constitution is the fundamental law of the nation. It should embody and express the dreams and passions, the ideals and aspirations of the people. It must be based on the consent of all, and respect the rights of all people who belong to this great land. It is essential for any Constitution, which is drawn up to make all the citizens realize that their basic privileges education, social and economic are afforded to them; that there will be cultural autonomy; that nobody will be suppressed; that it will be a Constitution, which will be democratic in the true sense of the term, where, from political freedom we will march on to economic freedom and equity. Every individual should feel that he is proud to belong to this great land.”

Radhakrishnan's speech on Aims and Objects Resolution in the Constituent Assembly on 20 January 1947 was another landmark. To appreciate the remarkable equipoise of that speech, one has to transpose himself to the complex setting at that juncture. Doubts, dismay and uncertainty afflicted Indian aspirations for freedom. The Muslim League was not prepared to cooperate. The British Government was equivocal. There were many who thought that the Constitution making was an exercise in futility. There was flagging or faith in the future. Commending the Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru and endorsing its rationale, he lifted the spirits of his colleagues in the Assembly by his forceful and forthright advocacy of the declarations embodied in the Resolution, declarations, which has become the sheet anchor of our Constitution. In unforgettable words, he confronted and discounted those who were suspicious, wavering and hostile and who looked upon the work of the Constituent Assembly with all kinds of misgivings. Outlining the task before the Constituent Assembly, unfolding a blueprint of common destiny, and giving an inspiring expression to the 'idealist' view, Radhakrishnan said:

“We are told that we cannot effect revolutionary changes through peaceful methods, through negotiation and discussion in constituent assemblies.

We reply that we have similar ends; we wish to bring about a fundamental alteration in the structure of the Indian society. We wish to end our political and economic dependence, but those who are strong of spirit, those who are not short of sight, take their chances they make their chances. Here is a chance that is open to us and we wish to use this to find out whether it will be possible for us to gain the revolutionary ends by methods, which are unusual as far as past-history is concerned. We want to try whether it will not be possible for us to effect a smooth and rapid transition from a state of serfdom to one of freedom. That is the undertaking, which this particular Assembly has on hand. We wish to tell all those who are abstaining from this Assembly that it is not our desire to establish any sectional Government. We are not here asking anything for a particular community or a privileged class. We are here working for the establishment of Swaraj for all the Indian people. It will be our endeavour to abolish every vestige of despotism, every heirloom of inorganic tradition. We are here to bring about real satisfaction of the fundamental needs of the common man of this country, irrespective of race, religion or community. If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, we cannot rally the people to our support. It is therefore, essential that our bugle-call, our trumpet-sound, must be clear, must give the people a sense of exhilaration, must give the suspicious and the abstaining a sense of reassurance that we are here pledged to achieve full independence of India, where no individual will suffer from undeserved want, where no group will be thwarted in the development of its cultural life. Therefore I believe that declaration of objectives of this character is essential and it is not necessary for us to wait till this Assembly is fuller than it happens to be at the present moment."

Radhakrishnan took the Assembly to the ancient roots of India's republican and natural law jurisprudence, historically and philosophically. He argued that the republican tradition was not foreign to the genius of India. He reminded the Assembly that Panini, Megasthenes and Kautilya had referred to the Republics of ancient India and that the great Buddha belonged to the Republic of Kapilvastu. He stressed the moral doctrine of Dharma, analogous to the Greek concept of natural law, and said succinctly:

"Much has been said about the sovereignty of the people. We have held that the ultimate sovereignty rests with the moral law, with the conscience of humanity. People as well as kings are subordinate to that Dharma, righteousness which is the king of kings."

In the course of his speech, Radhakrishnan made a classic statement on the reconciliation of liberty and restraint and on the commingling of the spiritual and the material in the constitutional matrix. He said:

"There is also a reference to fundamental rights in this Resolution. It is a social-economic revolution, which we are attempting to bring about. It is therefore necessary that we must remake the material conditions; but apart from remaking the material conditions, we have to safeguard the liberty of the human spirit. It is no good creating conditions of freedom without producing a sense of freedom. The mind of man must have full liberty to flower and mature and to grow to its fullest stature. The progress of man is due to the play of his mind, now creating, now destroying, always transmuting. We must safeguard the liberty of the human spirit against the encroachments of the State. While State regulation is necessary to improve economic conditions, it should not be done at the expense of the human spirit."

Radhakrishnan's speech on the national flag had a touch of poetry. According to him, the white in the very centre of the proposed Indian Flag represents the sun's rays, the path of light, and the light of truth and the way of transparent simplicity; the wheel represents virtue and the will to move. He explained that our Dharma is Sanatana, eternal not in the sense that it is a fixed deposit but because it has uninterrupted continuity. He also added that we could not say that we seek truth or practice virtue unless we scrap caste and untouchability. The ochre or Bhagwa, he explained, signifies renunciation, for according to India's ancient traditions, all forms of renunciation are to be embodied in Raja Dharma. The green in the flag stresses our relation to the soil and the plant life and beckons us to build our paradise on this green earth.

On his appointment as India's ambassador to USSR the Constituent Assembly took time to felicitate Radhakrishnan. By then, in the records of the Constituent Assembly he was being described as Professor and not by his title of knighthood. Characteristically, perhaps with naive goodwill, the professor declared himself a devout adherent of what he called 'the knowledge solution' as opposed to 'the power solution' apropos the problems of the world. He was not oblivious of the stark realities of power politics but he had the courage of his convictions to declare his fundamental faith, exemplifying the imagery of an age-old Indian literary and spiritual metaphor, a lotus in a murky pond at mud. Remarkably, the Indian ambassador in Moscow continued concurrently to be professor at All Souls, spending half the year at Oxford and half in Moscow. On the eve of his departure from Moscow, in 1952, the exponent of 'the knowledge solution' met Stalin, the practitioner of 'the power solution', patted him on the cheek and on the back and passed his hand over his head (a liberty he also took with Mao Tse Tung). The lonely dictator who was feared as terror personified said to him; "you are the first person to

treat me as a human being and not as a monster.”

Radhakrishnan was Nehru's personal choice for the office of Vice-President in the aftermath of certain sharp differences within the Congress Party relating to the choice of Rajenbabu as the first President of the Republic. Left to himself, Nehru was not inclined to give a second term to Rajenbabu.

Nehru would have liked to install Radhakrishnan as President in 1957. That did not happen. Radhakrishnan was disappointed and was not willing to continue as Vice-President. Nor was he prepared to accept a ministerial berth in Nehru's cabinet. In fact, he was preparing to leave Delhi for Madras. He was eventually persuaded to accept a second term as Vice-President mainly because he learnt from Indira Gandhi that Nehru was quite upset about it. Politics was politics even in those days. It was not and could not be pure milk and honey. There were many kinds of pulls and pressures and personal and temperamental differences in the political happenings behind the scenes. There was also a lot of grace, dignity and mutual regard and accommodation. Throughout, Nehru himself maintained a correct and respectful attitude towards the President. The President considered himself bound by self-imposed self-restraint. The relationship between Rajenbabu and Radhakrishnan remained unruffled and unimpaired. Radhakrishnan who had felicitated Rajenbabu on his election as the President of the Constituent Assembly and described him as the “suffering servant of India, or the Congress, who incarnates the spirit for which this country stands” had occasion to pay an affectionate homage to “this simple and typical Indian” when he succeeded him. Radhakrishnan's first official act as President was to request Rajenbabu to accept the first award of Bharat Ratna.

Radhakrishnan presided over the Rajya Sabha for ten years with a firm hand, in an independent, flexible and fair manner, and with a sense of humour. He commanded the obedience and allegiance of all sections of the House, known for their irrepressible parliamentary acumen and resilience. His rulings as Chairman of Rajya Sabha retained beyond question and controversy.

Experts were struck and amazed by his deep knowledge and fundamental understanding of constitutional and legal principles and of the history and ethos of the parliamentary system. When he was inducted as the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, consequent on his election as Vice-President, he recalled lightheartedly but meaningfully Lord Balfour's statement that hell was probably a place where the only reading matter was the file of Hansard! He fulfilled his role creatively because he did not view it in a narrow perspective. He looked at the constitution and culture. In 1954, while presenting an ivory

gavel to the US Vice-President (who presides over the Senate), he linked deliberative democratic culture with the improvement and integration of human nature and with the advancement of social equality and economic justice. Quoting from the last letter, which Jefferson ever wrote, he reminded the Senate that "the Mass of mankind was not born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God." A compulsive researcher and philosopher, Dr. Radhakrishnan went on to tell the Senate that "the common gavel was used by masons as an instrument to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder's use" and that the Free and Accepted Masons were taught to use it "for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices."

During his fifteen years as Vice-President he made innumerable speeches on diverse occasions. There was always a message and a dimension of death in what he said. There was deep humanity, compassion and sincerity in his speeches. Some of these speeches in cold print can never mean to the present day readers what they meant to us when we heard him speak. There was not only rhythm and resonance in the way he said what he said; there was the great impact of his presence. I cannot quite explain this mysterious mesmerism of the great philosopher who cast a spell on us when he spoke. It was not merely his choice of words or his oratory. I think it was the glow of his spirit and intellect, which produced that magic effect. Once when I was asked to translate him at a mammoth public meeting of a largely Hindi knowing audience, I told him that he was difficult to translate and that in any case he had a way of communicating his message by his very presence and style, rendering a translator superfluous. He smiled benignly like a teacher to a pupil, a relationship which had shaped it spontaneously between us and which I cherished very much. That relationship began, in fact, When I was a student though he was not formally my teacher. Perhaps, I never graduated out of it. I remember the many occasions when as a Member of Parliament I would visit him at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. More often than not I would sit by his bedside and savour of free-wheeling, wide-ranging conversations. Those conversations were the most enjoyable and instructive. I found that he kept himself fully informed of the debates in Parliament. Though he participated in parliamentary competitiveness only from the high pedestal of presiding officer and as president (who does not preside in the Houses of Parliament), he enjoyed the give and take and the rough and tumble of parliamentary life. In his characteristic epigrammatic style, he told me once: Parliament gives us a sense of proportion. It also gives us a sense of reality.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was obviously not a politician by vocation or by temperament. His approach and style had nothing of the politician. Far from being a shortcoming, I think it was his strength as a statesman. His not being a politician gave him detachment, enable him to view events and efforts in larger and long-term perspectives, made his independence a great moral asset to the Republic and made him the authentic voice of the community's conscience. Mostly, politicians respect only powers; in him, they learnt to respect not because of the political offices he held but because he was who he was. He brought to bear on our national life and its public discourse the distilled essence of the greatest achievement of the human intellect and the deepest experiences of the human spirit through the ages. He made the seers and the sages, old and new, come alive. He dispelled the ivory tower image of isolation and alienation of scholarship. He made knowledge seem relevant and wisdom not a mystic oracle but an inspiring presence. In his life and work, as a philosopher and a statesman, he reminded us vividly that: "The great everlasting things that matter for nations, especially our own nation, are the peaks of wisdom, love and sacrifice which have come down to us from over fourty centuries. As long as we carry in our hearts the image of these great peaks whose foundations are not shaken, though the earth may rock and sway our future is safe."

In Memoriam: Robert Burns

O beloved poet, at your noble birth
 A mighty storm o'erran the Ayrshire scene;
 Thus was the manner of the welcoming
 In which your country's love was well contained.
 Both pen and plough you lent a radiant power
 Through songs of mountain and of farm and field;
 Of earth you sang, and of mankind,
 And moulded history with your muse.
 Proud son of Mother Earth, a bard for a new age,
 Fearlessly you sounded the trumpet of democracy Brought to life the tales
 of common weal,
 And banished with contempt
 The pretensions of feudal pride.

Your steady poet's hand with tender care
 Restored the honour of the poorest soul
 Enthroning everyman in dignity and

Finding your own throne within his every heart.
Ploughman, herdsman, folk of hill and vale
Became your friends,
Their minds enchanted by a poet's words.

This is the trust to which the world is heir
By an immortal poet so devised;
For brightly still the heavens are aglow
With memories of twice a hundred years
Of one who bridges built in Time and
Space Pledged in the wide open skies of eternity
Through whom our life finds beauty, truth and grace!



Swami Avdeshanand Giri: A Great Social Reformer and the Saint

Swami Avdeshanand Giri is the 'Sangam' in which many streams converge and reflect an individual's quest for meaning; a collective need to understand 'and absorb the messages innate in the Great Bhagavaths (ultimate spiritual texts) to the most urgent social and ethical issues facing society today. He looks at the world with a spiritual vision in which, religion, science and art are integrated towards a higher evolving consciousness, oneness and self-realization. For him, spirituality means a return to one's authentic 'self', devoid of ego. Swamiji's aim is to help create the conditions for the birth of the quintessentially spiritual human being. In Swamiji's 'Poornata' 'wholeness', one perceives a spiritual Renaissance. He strides effortlessly between tradition and modernity. Both are necessary for the progress of human life and the human soul. For Swamiji, the seeker will receive what he seeks. At the level of science, the seeker perceives Swamiji to be a great social reformer his numerous projects and rural development work from water harvesting, cultivation of barren land, supplying drinking water to the masses, expressing environmental and ecological concerns as concern for the human rights aspirations of women establish an immediate connection with the contemporary man and woman. However, science is not the end for Swamiji. Science can only create a better world where poverty, illness and unfair disparities are destroyed. Spirituality creates values for a soul's elevation. Therefore, Swamiji draws his stories from the great religious texts to enhance spiritual and ethical values. The stories he narrates and weaves from the ancient texts make life a prayer, where one can touch, sense and feel God in everyday activity.

Swamiji is a great lover of music and the arts endowed with the gift of Saraswati in his speech and his songs. His Pravachans/discourses are a

deep spiritual experience interspersed with Vedic Mantra chanting rendered soulfully with melody to meet the divine. With understanding, spell binding oratory, love, humour and a touching clarity, Swamiji guides his audience through the songs of the mystics and saints and explains their views on relationships, the secret of surrender to God the beloved and the ultimate aim of our being so that each of us can enjoy a life of peace and celebration.

Swamiji is an enlightened Acharya and a master of Vedanta. His mission is not to create people of knowledge but people of wisdom. Science, art and religion, Swamiji believes, are not in conflict with each other but in synthesis and harmony can create the New Man, a realized, wise human being who can help create a beautiful new world.

Swamiji is an educationist and visionary who seek to retain the best of the past. He understands that India needs to revive the Gurukuls to impart the knowledge of the spirit. This has kept the spirit of India alive. Nothing can shake 'Bharat Mata' if every student in the Gurukul (which he hopes to establish all over India) has a 'mala in one hand and a mouse in the other'. The Mouse will equip him with the knowledge of the world, and the Mala (prayer beads) will empower him with the wisdom of the soul. His compassion and understanding of the requirements of a new world order draws people from all lifestyle to his fold. Intellectuals, professionals, human rights activists, journalists, artists, bureaucrats, politicians and other great Saints and Gurus all flock to hear him and be a part of his positive energy field.

He is the author of several books including interpretations of the Scriptures, Vedas and Upanishads. He is also the publisher of a newsletter, Prabhu Prem Pukar, which reflects his vision and values. His discourses on the Immortal Bhagawaths are now available on DVDs and are widely circulated. He has given Initiation/Deeksha to people all over the world. His discourses are telecast daily on Sanskar/Aashtal/Shakti TV/TV Asia and various other channels across Europe and America. They were telecast across the world from the Ardhkumbh Prayag 2007 Allahabad where lakhs of people had congregated.

Swami Avdheshanand Giri was born in the early hours of the Kartik Purnima and spent most of his life in meditation in the Himalayas. In 1998, at the Haridwar Mahakumbh, he was seated as the Acharya Mahamandleshwar Sripanchdasnaam Juna Peeth. He is the head of the largest group of saints and sadhus of the Order. He has Ashrams in Ambala, Haridwar and Varanasi. □

Subhas Chandra Bose: A Living Memory

In the history of India's freedom struggle, the place of Subhas Chandra Bose is unique. He alone, among India's leaders, thought of lighting the brute force of the British rulers by armed might. It is a tribute to his organizing capacity that he was able to raise a modern army of about 75,000 men and women. He inspired them with intense patriotic fervour and a burning desire to free their enslaved motherland.

However, Subhas Chandra Bose had much more in common with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru than is generally realized. Like them, he belonged to an educated and prosperous family, and was educated in England (Cambridge) and had travelled widely all over the continent of Europe. He had leftist leanings and looked at India in an international perspective. In all these traits, he resembled Nehru. At the same time, he had a deeply spiritual nature. His quest for truth and the right guru had taken him to each and every corner of India. While Gandhi's guru was Gokhale and Nehru sat at Gandhi's feet, Subhas chose to follow Vivekanand and Aurobindo Ghosh in the spiritual sphere and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das in politics. Each of the three great leaders of India Gandhi, Nehru and Bose had a special regard for their Muslim countrymen.

Subhas Chandra Bose was the sixth son and ninth child of Janakinath Bose, a lawyer. He was born at Cuttack (Orissa) on 23 January 1897. Among his ancestors, Mahipati Bose (Subudhi Khan) and Gopinath Bose (Purandar Khan) and some others held the offices of ministers and naval commanders under the Muslim rulers of Bengal. "The quarter, in which we lived," Says Bose in his autobiography, "was prominently a Muslim one and our neighbours were mostly Muslims. We took part in their festivals, in Muharram for instance,

and enjoyed their akharas. I cannot remember ever to have looked upon Muslims as different from ourselves in any way, except that they go to pray in a mosque."

The broad-minded views of Bose did not extend to Muslims alone. Describing his childhood, he said, "In my infancy, I was brought into touch with English People, English education and English culture. After that I went back to our culture both classical and modern."

At school, Bose was a brilliant student, but his hungry soul was not satisfied with textbooks alone. At first, he sought solace in the beauty of Nature. Then he discovered Ramakrishna, Vivekanand and the practice of Yoga. Ramakrishna taught him to renounce the lust for power and gold. As a young man, he resigned from the coveted Indian Civil Service and, later in life from the Congress presidentship on grounds of conscience. Vivekanand taught him the way to spiritual development. From him he also learnt that yogic exercises had to be supplemented by social service. Hence, Bose joined a 'secret group' of students who used to go to the villages to bring relief to victims of epidemics like plague, cholera and smallpox.

Bose had a rebellious and independent spirit. This was apparent from his earliest days. In 1914, he left, without the permission either of his parents or of the 'group', on a long pilgrimage to holy places in northern India, in search of a guru. On his return, he contracted typhoid. Despite his illness, however, he managed to get a first-class in his intermediate examination and was sent to Calcutta for further studies.

In the Presidency College, Calcutta, Bose organized a students' strike to demonstrate against an English professor who had insultingly pushed away an Indian student. For this, Bose was expelled from his college. He returned to Calcutta after a year and was allowed to join the Scottish Church College. His intellectual brilliance was un-dimmed and he got a first class in his BA examination. His father asked him to go to England in order to study and appear at the ICS examination. In deference to his father's wishes, he left for England on 15 September 1919.

Some people are born to succeed, yet are never satisfied with the success that they find so easy to achieve. Bose was one of them. In September 1920, the result of the ICS examination was declared and Bose stood fourth in order of merit. However, he felt that his conscience would not allow him to serve the foreign rulers as a high executive official. Therefore, he resigned from the ICS and returned to India. Now, he wanted to chalk out the future course of his life. He had long discussions with Mahatma Gandhi and C.R. Das. Choosing the latter as his mentor, he settled down as Principal of the National College at Calcutta. Next year, when Gandhiji started the Non-

cooperation Movement, Bose gave up his job to join it and court arrest.

In 1923 came the first parting of the ways between Bose and the Congress. For him, the issue was simple. He wanted to fight for the freedom of India on all fronts, even inside the legislatures. C.R. Das, the Congress President at the Gaya session, was also in favour of participating in the elections. Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to such a course and it was, therefore, not accepted by the Congress. C.R. Das resigned from the presidentship and, along with Motilal Nehru, formed the Swaraj Party. Bose was appointed as the editor of the party's journal, *Forward*. In 1924, he became the Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation under the mayorship of C.R. Das. In this capacity, Bose gained valuable experience of planning and practical administration. He made the use of khadi compulsory for the Corporation's employees, opened an education department and organized health associations.

On release from prison, Gandhiji devoted himself to khadi work while Deshbandhu took over the command of the political campaign. Soon, the pressure exerted by the Swarajists became unbearable for the Government. On 25 October 1924, the Government struck at the Swaraj party and arrested most of its leaders, including Subhas Bose. For some time, Bose continued to carry out his Corporation work from inside the jail, but the Government was uneasy at his presence in Calcutta and sent him, along with other Swarajist leaders to the Mandalay prison in Burma, where Tilak also had suffered six years of imprisonment earlier.

Henceforth, Bose was in and out of jail repeatedly. He was imprisoned eight times, released each time for reasons of health, and went each time to Europe for treatment. Actually, he spent most of his time touring Europe extensively to mobilize public support for India's freedom. British secret service agents followed him everywhere.

In 1938, while he was still in Europe, Subhas Chandra Bose was unanimously elected as the President of the 51st session of the Indian National Congress, to be held at Haripura. His presidential address revealed him as a mature thinker as well as a man of vision and action. He opposed the proposed federation, i.e. Government of India Act, 1935. He talked not only of freedom but also of reconstruction of the need of planning by setting up a Planning Commission and of the gradual socialization of the entire agricultural and industrial system. He gave a plan of action for the Congress party outside office as well as inside the legislature and functioning as a government.

Bose made such an impact on the Congress that he was re-elected President in 1939, even against the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi. Bose was physically sick at that time and his presidential address was read out. In

this, he urged strongly that it was the right time to give an ultimatum to the British Government for complete Swaraj.

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru decided that the Congress should not take unfair advantage of Britain's difficulties. On the other hand, it should cooperate with the British Government, trusting in its sense of fair play. The majority of Congress leaders followed Gandhi and Nehru. Bose, therefore, resigned as President and formed a new party, named the Forward Bloc, within the Congress to rally together the left wing of the party. Later, the Congress Executive Committee took disciplinary action against him. To this action, Bose reacted by saying, "I shall cling to the Congress with even greater devotion than before. I appeal to my countrymen to come and join the Congress in their millions and to enlist as members of the Forward Bloc."

He followed this up with a whirlwind tour of the country to organize public opinion against the war effort. As a result, he was arrested on 2 July 1940. On 26 November 1940, he went on a hunger strike to protest against the ill-treatment of prisoners. As his condition suddenly worsened, he was released on 5 December 1940, but was kept under constant police surveillance.

On 17 January 1941 Bose made his dramatic dash to liberty which thrilled the whole country. He left his house, somehow, about midnight, took a car to Gomoh, where he boarded a train and reached Peshawar. He crossed the Indo-Afghan border on foot, disguised as a Pathan, assuming the name of Ziauddin. He reached Kabul and from there went to Russia on an Italian passport. Thereafter, Bose flew from Moscow to Berlin. It was only when his voice was heard over the Berlin radio that people knew about his whereabouts.

As soon as Japan entered the war, Subhas Chandra Bose received a call from Rash Behari Bose, the veteran revolutionary who had settled down in Japan and had organized the Indians in South-East Asia to work for India's freedom, under the Indian Independence League. Subhas left Germany in a German U-boat for Madagascar, where he was transferred to a Japanese submarine. He arrived in Tokyo, met General Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister, and persuaded him to issue a declaration promising full independence to India in case Japan defeated Britain. Reaching Singapore, he took over the leadership of the Indian independence movement and set up a Provisional Government of Free India, which was recognized immediately by Japan, Germany, Italy, Burma, Thailand, Nationalist China and the Philippines.

Thus began the most glorious chapter in the life of Subhas Bose. He displayed tremendous energy and organizational skill in recruiting, training and financing the Indian National Army. The Indian soldiers and civilians in South-East Asia at once declared their allegiance to him and began to call

him 'Netaji'. He gave them the inspiring call of 'Jai Hind' and 'Dilli Chalo'.

It was with great difficulty that Bose made the Japanese to agree that Indian National Army units led by Indian officers should be the first to cross the border into India. Then followed the historic advance of the newly raised and not very well-equipped Indian National Army which fought so well that it soon liberated about 200 square miles of Indian Territory from the well-entrenched British forces. The Indian patriots set such illustrious examples of heroism and sacrifice that, according to Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan of the INA, the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Burma came to Netaji Bose, bowed before him and apologized to him for doubting that the Indian soldiers were brave and patriotic.

The Indian National Army was soon beset by various difficulties, such as lack of ammunition and food, rigours of the monsoon and breakdown in communications. Meanwhile, the Japanese air cover was also withdrawn, as its air force was needed to fight the Americans elsewhere. This was followed by the gradual withdrawal of the Japanese forces, as the war went badly for them. The Indian National Army, however, refused to retreat with the result that it was surrounded and sustained heavy losses. Thousands of its soldiers were captured by the British forces. They were disarmed and three of its senior officers, Sehgal, Dhillon and Shah Nawaz— a Hindu, a Sikh and a Muslim were court martialled. Jawaharlal Nehru himself organized and conducted their defence. There was overwhelming popular feeling in their favour. The British rulers had ultimately released them.

Netaji Bose left Burma for Singapore and continued his broadcasts to his fellow countrymen from there. On 18 August 1945, he boarded a Japanese aircraft for Tokyo. The plane landed in Formosa at 2.00 p.m., and according to the Japanese, it caught fire while taking off. Netaji Bose was badly burnt, but managed to come out of the plane. He was rushed to a hospital where he died the same night.

It is amazing how much Subhas Chandra Bose was able to achieve and accomplish in his short life of 48 years. He was brilliant as a student and could have easily attained a high position of power as an ICS officer. However, he preferred a life of trials and tribulations as a fighter for his country's freedom. His proud and independent spirit mocked at ill-health and ill-fortune. He took exile and imprisonment in his stride. He was a doer as well as a thinker, and a fighter who never submitted to defeat. In life, he was a natural leader of men, who inspired immense devotion and loyalty. In death, he became a legend that seems destined to live forever. People refuse to believe that Netaji Bose is dead. Perhaps they are right, for martyrs never die.



The Politics

Bernard Shaw invented the prototype of an intelligent citizen. Our own R.K. Laxman invented the common man who is Laxman's Indian version of Shaw's intelligent citizen. Laxman's common man is a simple, straightforward intelligent, real and authentic. To me he is the key to a robust understanding of Indian life. He makes my day first thing in the morning at the breakfast table. We came across innumerable variants and versions of Laxman's unforgettable typology in real life everywhere in cities restaurants. To see or overhear a group of them together in compartment of a train is an experience in itself. Such an intelligent citizen was travelling in a train. In the compartment, there was a political bigwig, who had lost a number of recent elections but has not lost his credentials as a member of the challenging club of India. He was well-known in the local constituency to which the travelling citizen belonged.

After an exchange of greetings, the citizen tried to strike a conversation with the tired and not quite retired politician. The citizen asked the political bigwig what he thought of India Shining and why his party was so worked up against India Shining when everyone was feeling that India was, in fact, shining and had a definite prospect of shining even more brightly. The bigwig smiled his photogenic public smile and said he knew India was shining but he did not have the permission of the High Command to say so. It was after all a matter of party discipline. He said that Atalji and Advaniji will surely make India Shine but he would not like India to shine until and unless his party came to power. The intelligent citizen retorted: what if you fail to come to power. The bigwig said in that case he was bound to affirm that he will never admit that India was shining, come what may. He concluded with a flourish, you must understand Mr. Intelligent Citizen, (what is your name?)

that the duty of the Opposition is to oppose and we are doing exactly that. Under the Party Code, he said, he had to wear the blinkers supplied to me in a kit by the headquarters.

The intelligent citizen was quick to shift his conversation with the bigwig and asked him how he looked at the prospects of the BJP-led combination and the Congress-led combination at the next election. He replied, to be honest, he was downhearted after his party had lost hands down in the last assembly elections despite the aggressive media manipulations. To be candid, he said, Bharat Uday Rath Yatra was beating all the road shows hollow. The trouble is he continued, it was only the beginning. The storm and avalanche of the supernatural Atal phenomenon was yet to come. In a voice choked with despair he said, it was quite unfair and a wholly unequal to contest. Wistfully he added, I wish the Congress joined the BJP led Coalition since it was not possible to lick them in the electoral battle it was best to join them. With an air of resignation, he said that in the elections Hawa is all that counts and the Hawa was blowing the BJP way.

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Guru Tegh Bahadur

I recall with pride that it was under the organizational auspices of Bharat Vikas Parishad, of which I was then the National President that we launched the initiative to celebrate Guru Teg Bahadur Martyrdom Day as a Citizens' day of dedication for the deeper understanding of the glories of the Sikh tradition and in particular as a celebration of the life and work of revered Guru Teg Bahadurji, the Saint-Poet, Satyagrahi, Philosopher. Human Rights Exponent and Exemplar Extraordinary, who was one of the greatest martyrs in the history of ideas and principles, which are central to human civilization. The present collection of contributions is a bead of our rosary of reverence. The contribution in this collection is like flowers of grateful remembrance in the fragrant garland of our homage to which I am honoured to contribute a few Prefatory Prologue. Those who have helped us to offer this garland are Justice Shri Rama Jois, Shri Joginder Singh, Shri Tarlochan Singh, Shri S.S. Boparai, Shri Charanjiv Singh, Shri H.V. Sheshadri, Shri L.M. Sabharwal, Shri Pawan Singh Padhi, Shri P.L. Rahi, Shri Vijay Kumar Chopra and Shri Prem Chand Parasa. Each contribution in this anthology is a flower with its own colour, fragrance and flavour. We offer this volume with the deepest devotion at the sacred altar of our imperishable national memory in the shrine of Indian history and heritage. The idea is to kindle a thousand lamps in the hearts and minds of humanity.

To understand the supreme grace of the life and message of Guru Teg Bahadur, we have to understand the luminous legacy of Guru Nanak Dev who gave to a conquered and defeated people, overrun by invasion and oppressed by inhuman brutality a unique spirituality and the mantra of Karmayoga, free of rancour, animosity and prejudice. Inspired by Nirguna Sufism of Kabir and his legacy, reinforced by a rejection of irrationality,

superstition and priestocracy, and enriched by a synthesis of the best of Vedanta and the best of Islam, Guru Nanakdev made a momentous contribution to the great dialogue of civilizations and internalized that dialogue in the tradition of Sikhism. That dialogue has been the heartbeat of the Sikh tradition in the thick of all the clashes and tragic turbulence of Indian history.

Born in the battle array of civilizations, Guru Nanakdev's role was that of a prophet of reconciliation and a teacher of the deepest spirituality. Long before the modern ideas of human rights and secularism were born, the founder Guru fearlessly and courageously condemned the conquering hordes of Babur for their barbaric inhumanity in the name of God, but he had nevertheless that profound equanimity to understand and appreciate Islam in a philosophical, spiritual and pragmatic perspective. Guru Nanak Dev's mission was to unshackle Indian humanity from the conventional prisons of narrow grooves of hatred and alienation. All his successor gurus and many of his followers lived and died to safeguard that legacy consecrating their lives to the unique vision and mission of Guru Nanakdev who was a great Rishi in the best traditions of India's Vedic and Sramana antiquity at an extremely critical time in Indian history. His vision and the glorious tradition of the successor gurus bequeathed to humanity a legacy of epic proportions.

Guru Nanakdev blazed the trail, and kindled the light of common and universal human spirituality and ethics to show us the path. Guru Shri Angad firmed up the foothold. Legend has it that the emperor Akbar himself went to join the Sikh Langar during the time of the third Guru, Shri Guru Amardas. Guru Shri Ramdas built the sacred lake in Amritsar in which the reflection of the Golden Temple built by Guru Arjandev has a heavenly hue and enthralling ethereal beauty. Guru Arjan was a great saint and poet. He brought the Adigranth to the Shrine in Amritsar, but the rising power and popularity of the Indian Civil Society under his leadership brought the wrath of Emperor Jahangir whom history will hold unforgivably guilty for the saint-guru's assassination and martyrdom. Guru Arjan's immortal work 'Sukhmani' is a cherished part of the world heritage of sacred poetry. Guru Arjan's martyrdom was a turning point in Sikh history. That is when his son and successor, Guru Shri Har Gobind emerged as the powerful hero of the new composite image of 'Peeri' and 'Meeri' symbolize by the two swords he carried. His Meeri and Peeri, his throne and the two swords and the plume he wore became the shining regalia and inspiring emblem of India's pride. After Guru Shri Har Gobind's temporal and spiritual reign and during the turbulent and embattled time of Guru Shri Hari Rai and Guru Shri Hari Krishan, atrocities and oppression in the name of Islam and under the authority of the Mughal rule under Aurangzeb

assumed perilous proportions. It was during that critical juncture that Guru Shri Teg Bahadur was entrusted with the legacy of the Sikh tradition to fulfil his tryst with destiny implicit in the noble meaning of his first given name, Tyagmall, meaning literally the Champion of Sacrifice.

Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur was the youngest son of the heroic Guru Shri Har Gobind. It is believed that he was later given the name Tegh Bahadur because Shri Guru Har Gobind foresaw his skills and abilities in swordsmanship and super-human valour. It is said that even at the age of five, Tegh Bahadurji as a little boy was able to go into Samadhi. Though he did not directly succeed his father Guru Shri Har Gobindji, his father did prophesy that one day he would adorn the Guru Gaddi and would attain the ultimate glory in breaking the power of the tyranny sitting on the throne of India. Between his father and Guru Shri Tegh Bahadur there were two other Gurus. Guru Tegh Bahadur succeeded his nephew who was a young boy. At a time when he was on the verge of death, the young Guru uttered the words 'Baba Bakale' meaning Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Sikh envoys traced Shri Teg Bahadurji in his remote village retreat. There were, however, several claimants to the Gaddi. Tegh Bahadurji did nothing to push himself forward, rather protesting in humility his unworthiness for that high pedestal. One of the claimants was the wicked Dhirmal who hired an assassin who shot at and wounded Guru Tegh Bahadur. The great Guru, in his magnanimity refused to punish the assailant, teaching the lesson that to punish is human but to forgive is Divine. Thus, he taught the community against the evil of violent personal revenge. Ironically, when he went to Amritsar, the Sikh priests closed the doors of the temple against him! All he did at that time was to sit under a tree and sing the Gurbani. Endowed with the rare gifts of quiet magnanimity, unruffled equanimity and deep spirituality, Guru Tegh Bahadur was a great Bhakta poet. His creative and soulful poetry in Brij Bhasha is like Sukh Mani Saheb. In 1665, he founded his new capital at Anandpur where I was privileged to receive the honour of the Khalsa, which I value immensely. Gururji travelled extensively throughout India. He went to Kurukshetra, Prayag and Banaras to Orissa, Bengal and Assam. His itinerary of Bharat Darshan was to unify the nation and to inculcate in the people the virtues of peace, friendship, goodwill and surrender to the Divine. The city of Patna and the many places he visited in Assam, Bengal and Orissa bear testimony to the loving, ennobling and unifying embrace of his arms from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Anandpur to Assam.

Each one of the Gurus made a sterling contribution of his own for the benefit of the oppressed and the embattled Indian humanity, but by the time Guru Teg Bahadur appeared on the scene as the ninth guru, the arrogance

and intolerance of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb had rejected and reversed the policies of reconciliation and accommodation with non-muslims, a policy with which Emperor Akbar had experimented creatively, courageously and in good faith. It is unfortunate that some of religious fundamentalists and fanatics of his time and in later years have derided, dismissed and denigrated Akbar as a heretic. By way of contrast, Aurangzeb's bigotry, religious fanaticism and his ruthless pursuit of absolute power knew no bounds. He imprisoned his own father, killed all his brothers including his elder brother Dara Shikoh, who was the rightful successor to Shah Jahan by the established rule of primogeniture. Aurangzeb relentlessly damaged and undermined the possibility of civilizational Entente Cordiale between Hindus and Muslims and presaged the disintegration of his empire.

Aurangzeb used oppression, exploitation, and rank discrimination as instruments of State policy to coerce people into conversion to Islam. An unabashed tyrant and a self appointed Caliph of Islam; he unleashed forces of state terrorism upon the people of India. Aurangzeb imposed humiliating taxes such as Jazia on non-Muslims especially Hindus, launched a pogrom of wholesale religious proselytization at the point of sword and by intimidation and inducement. He tried to usurp territories of Hindu princes whom he pretended to befriend by all kinds of cloak and dagger conspiracies, which became his trademark. He destroyed temples, built mosques over those sites and generally sowed seeds of religious hatred in the name of religion. Aurangzeb's rule witnessed the nadir of the ethics of governance and proved to be the threshold of the epilogue and the apocalypse of the Moghal Empire. Against the tyranny of Aurangzeb, Maharaj Shivaji, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Nanak and Guru Maharaj Gobind Singh, the Tenth Nanak stood rocklike.

My good friend and distinguished successor as President of Bharat Vikas Parishad, Justice Shri M. Rama Jois (formerly Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana and Governor of Bihar) has in his brilliant contribution to this volume drawn a vivid portrait of the crisis created and precipitated by Aurangzeb who let loose a reign of terror in Kashmir. There is a poignant story about Guruji's response to the Kashmiri Pandits. He formulated the fundamental proposition of Satyagraha when he said, that someone of spiritual purity and holiness would have to sacrifice his life to vindicate the cause of humanity and justice. That is when the young Shri Gobind Dev who was to become the Tenth Guru said: "Father, who is purer and holier than thou!" In addition, so the Ninth Guru embarked on his historic Satyagraha Yatra with many of his ardent disciples and followers, notably, Bhai Matidas, Bhai Sati Das and

Bhai Dayaldas. When Guru Teg Bahadur was produced before Aurangzeb, the Emperor told him and his ardent disciples that they should embrace Islam and that the alternative to it was to face death. Guru Tegh Bahadur told him that he believed that. His soul was beyond death, destruction and torture and that he and his colleagues were not afraid of death. The Guru exhorted Aurangzeb and told him that he was acting against the tenets of Islam. The exhortation fell on deaf ears. Bhai Matidas was cut into two pieces with a saw. Bhai Dayaldas was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. They were uttering Gurbani till their souls departed from their bodies for their heavenly abode. Guru Teg Bahadur's head was severed from his body at the site called Gurudwara Sisganj and venerated as a shrine of martyrdom. These gruesome and inhuman killings are stated to have taken place on 11 November 1675. Justice Shri Rama Jois aptly compares the ninth Guru to the illustrious Emperor Shibi of yore, who sacrificed his body by allowing it to be eaten away by eagles to save the mild and peaceful dove seeking his protection. In the immortal words of his son and successor, Guru Teg Bahadur gave his head but not his dignity, self-respect and convictions. He held his head high because his mind was without fear as Gurudev Tagore put it.

The tremendous sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur and that of his grandsons, his son and their devoted followers did not go in vain. People who were in slumber woke up and there was divine retribution and curse on Aurangzeb and his successors. Inspired by the sacrifice of his father, Guru Gobind Singh was determined to weld the mild Hindus and Sikhs from doves into hawks for the sake of justice and freedom. Like Maharana Pratap before him, Guru Gobind Singh's life and work were truly heroic. His sons were killed mercilessly and he himself was martyred by the minions and machinations of Aurangzeb. Guru Gobind Singh redeemed the pledge he had made to empower the people of India and destroy the tyranny of Aurangzeb. The Tenth Guru had declared:

“Chidio se main baj banaoon,

Sava lakh se ek ladaoon,

Tab Govind Singh nam Kahavoo.”

“I shall transform sparrows into hawks. I shall make one equal to battle one and a quarter lakh of enemies. Thereby I shall justify my name as Guru Gobind Singh.”

Guru Shri Teg Bahadur was by temperament a renunciation. His heartfelt words in his Vairagyamayi Vani, quoted in this volume, delineate the abysmal depths of moral degradation to which man is driven by his evil nature and into which Aurangzeb had fallen irretrievably:

"O Man' please listen,
 Human birth is great. Don't waste it.
 Power and luxury surely are transitory
 You have spoiled your life which is great
 By your own misdeeds, by acts deliberate,
 Moral values were nearly forgotten
 You committed sins without hesitation
 See to what abysmal depths you have fallen.

Shri Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom reminds us of the roots of our Culture and Nationalism as the foundations of our heritage. He gave us Satyagraha, which ultimately proved to be the most potent weapon in India's struggle for freedom. He bequeathed to us the sheet anchor of secularism and the sublime heights of the vision and values of Justice, Freedom, Equality, Fraternity and Human Dignity. Guru Teg Bahadur was a capable warrior but he chose not to demonstrate his valour in war. He waged Peace, not war. He chose to establish the superior valour of spiritual and moral values. His was a life of total dedication to the quest of the Eternal Divine. The hymns composed by him constitute the purest litany of the soul. He was like Raja Janak Videha with a supreme detachment and true spirit of renunciation. He was a man who did not grieve in moments of sorrow and suffering for he was free from fear, free from grief and free from the snare of worldly delight and temptation, free from jealousy and envy, and free from greed, free from mundane worldly attachments. His personal impact and legacy of his life led his son Guru Gobind Singh to create the Khalsa. My distinguished friend Shri Joginder Singh reminds us in his contribution to this volume of the true meaning of Khalsa. He quotes the words of Bhai Nandlal Goya, a poet laureate of Guru Gobind Singh's court, which we must comprehend and celebrate:

Khalsa is one who does not speak ill of others;
 Khalsa is one who fights in the vanguard;
 Khalsa is one who conquers the five evils;
 Khalsa is one who destroys doubts and heresy;
 Khalsa is one who gives up ego;
 Khalsa is one who keeps away from woman, not his wife;
 Khalsa is one who loves and cares all as his own;
 Khalsa is one who attunes himself with God.

Shri Guru Gobind Singh wrote to Aurangzeb as did Shivaji Maharaj one of the most eloquent epistles on good, just and equitable governance and inter-religious harmony but their noble teachings fail on deaf ears. Shivaji Maharaj taught Aurangzeb an unforgettable lesson through his own uniquely

effective methods of warfare. Guru Teg Bahadur's Satyagraha, his peaceful ways and the spiritual power of his martyrdom paved the way for Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Guru Teg Bahadur's and Maharaj Shivaji's legacies of secularism and humanity are legendary. The ninth Guru in the Sikh tradition opted for the path of Ahimsa and Satyagraha by making the supreme sacrifice of his and the life of his ardent different. Like Kabir, Guru Nanakdev, Guru Arjandev, Guru Teg Bahadur, the poet, saint and martyr stirs our souls, purifies our hearts and inspires us to noble deeds. Like Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi, Guru Teg Bahadur proclaims through the message of his life the courage of his convictions, his deep humanity and universal live, and his impregnable sense of unvanquished human dignity and undefeated sense of freedom. At his feet, we offer this garland of humanity's homage.

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Mother Teresa and Her Magnetic Spirituality

To borrow and adapt an ancient Indian metaphor, one requires the pen of love and the indelible India ink of compassion to write about the saga of the life and work of Mother Teresa.

A certain day is etched in my memory when we were informed out of the blue that Mother Teresa was on her way to visit us at our home. When she came, my wife and I felt as if Grace and Compassion Personified had entered our home with an ethereal fragrance of spirituality. We were under her spell. We took no photographs and let her visit be stored in the treasure chest of our memory. That fragrance of her blessing has always been with us. I found in Mother Teresa a magnetic spirituality, a rocklike resolve, a melting compassion and an overriding sense of confidence in her mission. Subsequently, I had several visits to Kolkata to meet her. Each meeting filled me with a wonderful sense of being in the precincts of sanctity and a feeling of basking in the glory of true greatness.

After I began my tour of diplomatic duty in the United Kingdom in early 1991, I had occasion to reinstate the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales to India despite the negativity of procedural red tape of protocol both in India and in Britain mainly because the Prince was very much on my side and so was the then Prime Minister of India. That visit laid the foundation of a much warmer and more meaningful relationship between India and Britain. My own convictions on economic and cultural dimensions of diplomacy found an eloquent and exemplifying expression in the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales in India. I found in HRH the Prince of Wales a genuine, innate and deep-seated love for India bequeathed in part by Lord Mountbatten nurtured by the spirituality of Kathleen Raine, the poetess and reinforced by his own

worldview of life at the level of philosophy, literature and culture. I was proud to be a part of it all. However, there was a snag. I very much wanted Princess Diana to accompany the Prince and was disappointed by her indifference with regard to her being a part of the royal visit. The palace must have been concerned about the negative signals, which Princess Diana's conspicuous absence would convey. She said to me when I called her, "High Commissioner. I will go but only if you can guarantee my meeting with Mother Teresa". I deliberately used a word (Inshallah) in response, which made her curious. She wanted to know what I meant by 'Inshallah'. I translated the word as 'Hari ITchha' in Hindi and 'God Willing' in English. That fortuitous word and its explanation and translation eventually saved me from an actionable claim for breach of promise! In the event, she did accompany HRH the Prince of Wales on that milestone visit, but she made it painfully memorable, as was her wont, by that globally publicized photograph of her desolate and devastating loneliness with the beautiful Taj in the background as the backdrop contrast of her life. Later, during the royal visit, I was perturbed by a message when we were in Hyderabad. The message I received was that Mother Teresa had taken ill in Rome and would not be in Kolkata where the royal plane of HRH the Prince of Wales was to take us to disembark and from where the Prince of Wales would proceed onwards to Kathmandu. Princess Diana's immediate reaction was emotional and impulsive. She told me she would cancel her visit to Kolkata and return from Hyderabad itself. I explained to her that it was Mother Teresa's work she was going to see in Calcutta and that is where Mother Teresa was, heart and soul. I also told her that I would help facilitate her visit to Mother Teresa in Rome. That I did. She accepted my advice and we went to Kolkata. We travelled together in the same car. I could see how deeply touched she was by thousands and thousands of human beings thronging the street of Calcutta. On her visits to the house where Mother Teresa stayed with her sister of charity and the many institutions of humanitarian services, which were like the rays of the sun that was Mother Teresa, I saw Princess Diana in her full humanitarian element. On a visit to a home of abandoned children, she held children in her arms, one of whom clung to her and would not let go. At the Kalighat where we visited those who were on the threshold of death, I saw Princess Diana full of the milk of human kindness. Our visit to leprosy home was the ultimate witness of her compassionate credentials. She sat with leprosy patients on their beds, touched them, consoled them, reassured them, and gave them hope. I felt that on that day the spirit of Mother Teresa who was physically far away in Rome had as it were, entered into Princess Diana. When we rode back to the airport and I

prepared to bid her farewell, the Princes shook hands with me warmly and said, "Thank you High Commissioner forever for this marvellous and memorable day in my life. How right you were about the heart and soul of Mother Teresa in her work in Calcutta! This day has made us friends forever. However, remember you have to arrange for my meeting with Mother Teresa. I am not releasing you from your promise". Once again, I said 'Inshallah', That meeting did take place. In addition, when she returned from Rome, she came informally to our residence and spent nearly an hour with me. What inexperience, it was to see her work and then to see her in that sequence? It was for me a privilege to know both the Royal Highnesses and to enjoy what I felt was real friendship, trust and confidence. Both of them were by all accounts, the most extraordinary individuals who appeared to be in an implacable adversarial relationship. My deep and ardent devotion to the Prince of Wales and his immeasurable affection for me on the one hand and the warm regard Princess Diana showed me appeared to be two sides of the same coin in my life. It was a measure of her confidence in me that at a later point of time, she had a long private discussion with me on land mines when I felt the bond forged between us, by Mother Teresa and her message of humanitarian concurrence and compassion. A few weeks before she died in Paris she invited my wife and me for an exclusive private lunch at her Kensington Palace residence. We saw the crystal Ganesha near the entrance with a floral offering in front. During the lunch, we spoke of Mother Teresa and her work and worked out a plan for a big charity devoted to the problem of HIV-AIDS in Africa and India.

Revered as an icon in India and abroad, Mother Teresa was not without her quota of iconoclasts in the Media. More often than not these people were lean, mean, and irreverent mischievous. That kind of iconoclasm journalism has become the fashion of the day for a certain class of media persons and appears to have acquired a bit of intellectual respectability despite their scant respect for truth and their known proclivity for pervasion and distortion. A number of pamphlets, polemical news items and a book appeared in concert making reckless accusations against Mother Teresa, belittling and running down all her humanitarian work. However, then truth and fairness count for little with motivated and malicious persons determined to tarnish revered reputations. Being my country's diplomatic representative, I did not have the freedom to participate on my own initiative in the unseemly polemics. At that time fortuitously, a painter wished to present a portrait of Mother Teresa to me. I said I would receive it at a public function and install it in the High Commission. A lot of media persons, a few MPs and intellectuals

were present when the portrait was presented to me. It was a God sent opportunity designed and tailored, as it were, for what was regarded as a frontal counter attack by means of an affectionate and reverent eulogy of Mother Teresa and an expression of anguish at the undeserved insinuation and accusations. I concluded by asking forgiveness for Mother Teresa's detractors for they knew not what they were doing and even if they knew what they had done.

The news of her passing away occupied the media for several days and during that time, I had the opportunity to say in response to a question about her canonization, "the People of India and the People of the World have canonized her. They need not verification except the inspiring testimony of her life as a world citizen." That testimony of her life will continue to inspire humanity and will always be a testimonial of love, humanity and compassion.

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Gautam Buddha and His Teachings

Gautam Buddha was a younger contemporary of Vardhamana Mahavira, the last of the twenty-four Jain tirthankaras. He was influenced by the teachings of Lord Parsvanatha, the twenty-third tirthankara, of the Sramana Jain tradition. He developed and preached his doctrine of suffering and the end of suffering. He founded a monastery and had a large following. There is reason to believe that words of Lord Buddha (and those of Lord Mahavira, though not to the same extent as those of Lord Buddha) were recollected and faithfully preserved.

Of the three baskets of the Pali canon or Tipitaka of Buddhists, Vinayapitaka is the basket of the manual of discipline of the monastic order; Suttapitaka consists of sermons, many of them in the form of a dialogue; Abhidhammapitaka, which is surrounded by controversy in respect of its origin and exact text, contains a more learned treatment of the rules of Dhamma and refers to what may be called 'the psychological foundations of Buddhist ethics.' The canonical Buddhist literature in the three baskets included prose sermons (sutta); pithy sayings (udana); sermons in a mixture of prose and verse, (Geyya); commentaries, (Veyyakarana); Gatha verses or stanzas; short speeches or quotations of Lord Buddha's sayings (Itivuttaka); reports of miracles (Abbhutadhamma); stories of former births of Buddha (Jataka); and teachings in the form of questions and answers (Vedalla). Each genre of Buddhist literature is primarily a vehicle of Buddhist teachings, although there are writings in the nine Angas 'limbs' of that literature, there are occasional human-interest digressions of the storyteller which many have only a remote connection to the precepts of Lord Buddha. We encounter in that literature not only kings, princes, princesses, monks, nuns and commoners but also courtesans, dogmatic exponents of Brahmanical ways, wealthy merchants and men and women

of different avocations and in different stations of life. Though there are different versions and linguistic variations (Pali and Magadhi), the first two baskets of the Pali Tipitaka (Vinaya and Suthapitaka) correspond to the Magadhi canon of the third century BC and this is evidenced by the inscriptions of Ashoka, some of which have an exquisite literary quality which synthesize the teachings of Lord Buddha for individual life and civil society and a philosophy of governance and statecraft.

The Teachings of Buddha

The Vinayapitaka contains, primarily, an elaborate code of discipline for the community of monks and nuns, including a list of transgressions and prescribed atonements and penances. In the canonical literature, there are many stories, which appear to have been improvised ad hoc to drive home a conclusion but there are many others, which give us graphic and evocative recollections and legends. For instance, Mahavagga relates in an engaging style and somewhat archaic language how Gautama attained enlightenment (bodhi), how he formulated and announced his doctrine, and how he gained his first disciples. There is, for example, a story of young men pursuing a harlot who had stolen their belongings after a voluptuous night of lust and asking Buddha if he had seen the woman they are looking for. The Buddha tells them that they would do better to seek themselves, rather than the woman, and preaches his doctrine to them. In the event, they all become monks. We read in Mahavagga the story of Lord Buddha visiting his native town and admitting his son Rahul into his monastic order. There is also the story of how Lord Buddha gave his consent to the founding of the order of nuns; the story of a rich merchant who presents his garden to the Buddhist Samgha; and the story of Devadatta, schismatic and inimical detractor of Lord Buddha. The story of Saalvati, the famous courtesan, and her son, the legendary healer Jivaka who was also Lord Buddha's physician and a friend of the Buddhist Samgha is a sociological portrait of that age. In the narratives in the lighter vein as well as serious narratives in canonical literature, there are scattered and interspersed the purest teaching of Lord Buddha, profound aphorisms, observations and edifying lessons and conclusion, which are as literary as they are philosophical.

Ethical Issues and the Challenge to Brahminical Priestocracy

The first four nikayas of Suttapitaka consist of speeches and dialogues in the prose form, although occasionally there are versified interruptions and elevated prose-poetry. Most of the Suttas relate to ethical issues and to Virtue

(Sila), Concentration or Meditation (Samadhi) and insight (Panna) leading to the state of Arhat, the ideal of devout life both in Buddhism and Jainism. We are told in the first Sutta of as many as sixty-two different extant views of sophists and philosophers which according to Lord Buddha's preaching were obstacles to true salvation. Then there is the discourse on the rewards of asceticism (Samanna-phala-Sutta), a graphic description of the king Ajatsattu to Lord Buddha and a refutation of the caste system. In the Tevijjasutta, which is a 'discourse on the knower of three Vedas' and in Kutadanta Sutta which is a discourse on the Sharp-tooth Brahmin, Lord Buddha ridicules with refined irony the Brahmanical cult with its bloody sacrifices and the striving of the Veda-knower for union with Brahman and expounds the Buddhist concept of non-violent 'sacrifices' and ideals of life, very much in the same vein and tenor of logic as was done by Lord Mahavira. In another Sutta (the Maha-Satipatthane Sutta) there is a discourse on the 'Four notable truths of Buddhism.' We also find a poetic biography of the Buddha and the great discourse on his perfect Nirvana.

The Majjhimanikaya contains discourses on the four noble truths, on the vanity of desires, Nirvana, meditation and Karma. The sermons are put in the form of dialogues and are laced with myths, fables and legends in aid of moral lessons and doctrinal precepts as in the supposedly Hindu epics and puranas, which really belong to the mixed Vedic-Sramana pedigree.

Human Equality and Refutation of the Caste System

The Assalayana Sutta provides an eloquent exposition of the concept of human equality and a powerful refutation of the claims of the supremacy of the Brahmin caste by Lord Buddha himself:

"What dost thou think, Assalayana? Suppose that an anointed kind of the warrior race causes a hundred men of different castes to be assembled together; men shall come from the families of warriors, of Brahmans, of the nobility, and they shall take an upper friction-stick from a Sal tree or Salala tree or sandal tree or Padmaka tree, produce a fire by turning it (in the lower friction-stick) and bring forth a flame. In addition, there shall come men from families of handalas, hunters, basketmakers, chariot-builders, bukkusas, and they shall take an upper friction-stick from a dog's trough, or a hog's trough, or a washing trough, or a stick of ricinus wood, produce a fire through turning, and bring forth a flame. Now, will the fire that the warriors, Brahmans, etc., have produced with the fine wood have flame, brightness and light, and will this fire be useful for all fire purposes? In addition, will the fire, which the handalas, hunters, etc., have produced with wood from the dog's trough,

etc., have no flame, no brightness and no light, and will this fire not be useful for all fire purposes? Assalayana naturally has to reply that there is no difference between the two kinds of fire and Gotama concludes that it is the same with the castes."

Four Noble Truths -- The Samgha and the Moral Order

The Sacca-Samyutta (Samyuttanikaya, LXV) deals with the four noble truths (sacca) of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way to the cessation of suffering. In that Samyutta we also find Lord Buddha's 'Sermon of Banaras' by means of which Lord Buddha set the wheel of the Moral Order (Dhammacakka) in motion. Like Yudhishtira in Mahabharata, Lord Buddha is also portrayed as satisfying a Yaksha by his wise answers to the questions of the Yaksha.

Literature as a Discourse of Philosophy in India

There is in the Buddhist literature the towering and shining presence of the Wise, Enlightened and Compassionate Buddha, Buddha the great teacher and exponent of his creed, and of Buddhist ideas and teachings. Every genre of literature and every means of argumentation and communication are employed to advance the cause of the Buddhist teachings, which often enthralled the audiences big and small. Similes, parables, poetry, ballads, myths, legends, dialogues and discourse made the teachings of Gautam Buddha, and equally of Vardhamana Mahavira, not only the foundation of Buddhism and Jainism but the foundation of the Hindu society. There were periods of Indian history when the large sections of people of India had embraced the Sramana Tradition either through Jainism or through Buddhism. There is today only a small number of Buddhists and neo-Buddhists in India. Jains are also numerically a small minority. The literature of Jains and Buddhists and their ethical philosophy of equality, humanity, non-violence, restraint, tolerance and charity, however, became an integral and inseparable part of the philosophical and literary heritage of modern India. Much of the Vedic and Upanishadic wisdom came to terms with the message of Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha. Every renaissance of Indian philosophy and literature from Asvaghosh and Kalidasa, from Adi Sankara to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Jaidev and Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, from Kabir, Surdas, Mira, that we may be endowed with 'reason' that has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit to quote from the poet Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali which represents an amalgam of literature and philosophy par excellence.

There is a primordial quality in the poetic celebration of nature and

its gifts to human kind in the Vedas. To the inspired poets and seers of mankind at the dawn of civilization, Truth, Beauty and Well-being are revealed in all their glory. The Vedic seers experienced the miracle of the departure of the night and the radiance of Ushas, the Dawn, in a great dazzle of colour rushing ahead of the imminent rise of the sun. They saw night and dawn as immortal sisters whose endless road is the very same road, which they take following each other incessantly as if guided by gods. In the miracle of the dawn and the night; in the effulgent splendour of the Sun Divine; in the power and glory of wind, the vital spirit of the spirit divine whose voice is heard but whose shape we cannot see; in the fragrant maternal grace of the forest spirit (Aranyani), in the depth of the oceans and the flow of the rivers; and in the filial homage to Earth, the mother, the Vedic poets and seers discovered the law which sustains the harmony of cosmic forces.

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Kabir: A Poet and Philosopher

Many centuries of doctrinal and ethical introspection, in which the vedic the Lokayat the Sramana (Jain and Buddhist), the Adi Sankara, the Vaishnava, the Shaiva and the Shakta schools had dissected, debated and discoursed on issues of philosophy, ethics and civil society prepared the ground for new civilizational encounters and cultural osmosis and synthesis of the Hindu and Islamic ways of life and thought in the realm of music, dance, painting, architecture, literature, philosophy, spiritualism and in the chores, mannerisms, and challenges of the daily lives of the people. Mughal, Kangra and Rajput miniature paintings, kathak nritya, Hindustani music, new developments in music, refinements of calligraphy, efflorescence of architecture and the growth of handicrafts and aesthetics of interior decoration bear the stamp of India's composite culture. The languages and literature of India became natural vehicles of the new synthesis. Gastronomical and sartorial changes reflected a readiness to adopt the philosophies of Amir Khusrau, Abdur Rahim Khankhana, Malik Mohammed Jayasi, Raskhan and Dara Shikoh, to name only a few of the most prominent who augmented mutual empathy and interchange. Sufi and Vaishnava saints occupy the pride of place among men of religion who strove to create liberal attitudes among all sections of Indians. Kabir and Guru Nanak blazed new trails of thought and illumined the ethical-spiritual-rational path of latter day Indian secularism, the ethical-spiritual-rational path of Indian secularism, thus providing fruitful and harmonious avenues of synthesis, rising above the pettiness and the parochialism of the sectarian establishments.

Kabir: The Quintessential Poet-Philosopher of Self-Realization

The great Kabir, a disciple of Ramananda, was one of the most brilliant

exponents of Nirguna spirituality and Upanishadic philosophy. He was truly a pioneer of the rational renaissance in medieval India. His parentage is unknown. The legend is that he was an illegitimate son of a Brahmin widow and was brought up and adopted by a Muslim weaver and his wife. It is believed that he was a contemporary of Sikander Lodhi, the fanatic Sultan, who tried to put an end to Kabir's life. Kabir led a simple householder's life and earned his livelihood by his adoptive father's profession of weaving; and this he appears to have done even when he rose to the pinnacle of fame and was held in the highest veneration by a large number of disciples. Kabir lived in Varanasi. According to Bhaktamala of Nabhaji, Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognize the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy. He did not accept the theory of four divisions of life. He did not favour mortification of flesh and did not confine himself to any particular religious system. He had no denominational preference for either Hinduism or Islam. He had followers amongst Muslims as well as Hindus and both claimed him as their own. Kabir regarded the differences between Hindus and Muslims as irrelevant and artificial. Legend has it that when he died at Maghar in the District of Gorakhpur, there was a dispute among his Hindu and Muslim adherents as to the manner of disposal of his dead body, for the Hindus wanted to burn it and the Muslims to bury it. When the sheet covering Kabir's dead body was removed, there was only a heap of flowers. The legend illumines the message of Kabir. Kabir was a revolutionary teacher of his times. He rejected tradition and orthodoxy. He repudiated ritualism. He taught in the language of the people and found a warm and hospitable welcome in the hearts of the people. His message was the message of love and humility, transcending all sectarian barriers. Kabir sang in one of his popular poems, translated by Rabindra Nath Tagore who drew copiously on the philosophy of Upanishads and the poetry of Kabir:

"O servant, where dost thou seek me,
 Lo, I am beside thee.
 I am neither in temple nor in mosque:
 I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:
 Neither am I in rites and ceremonies
 Nor in Yoga and renunciation,
 If thou art a true seeker,
 Thou shalt at once see Me:
 Thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time
 Kabir says, O Sadhu
 God is the breath of all breath:

Kabir and Nanak: Spiritual Quest and Rejection of Ritual

Another passage from the timeless teachings of Kabir inspired by Upanishadic literature and philosophy is equally evocative:

“Be truthful, be natural; Truth alone is natural. Seek this truth within your heart, for there is no truth in the eternal religious observances neither in the sects nor in religious garb nor in pilgrimages. Truth resides within the heart, and is revealed in love, in strength, in compassion. Conquer hatred and extend your love to all mankind. For God resides in all.”

Kabir did not found a sect. Kamal, his son was approached to found a sect but he replied: “My father had striven throughout his life against all forms of sectarianism. How can I, his son, destroy his ideal and thereby commit his spiritual murder?”

The powerful message of Kabir’s humanism has left an indelible imprint on the consciousness of India. That transcendental non-sectarian humanism is integral to modern Indian secularism.

In Guru Nanak, who also had Hindu and Muslim disciples and in whose memory the Hindus erected a shrine and the Muslims a tomb on the bank of Ravi, Kabir’s teachings found a worthy protagonist and a great exponent. The following hymns of Guru Nanak exemplify his emphasis on the higher form of religion shorn of its external paraphernalia and ritualism.

“Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a Yogi’s staff or in ashes smeared over the body; religion consisteth not in earrings worn, or a shaven head, or in the blowing of horns or bathing at places of pilgrimages. Abide pure amid the impurities of the world: Thus shalt thou find the way of religion. Religion consisteth not in mere words; He who looketh on all men as equal is religious. Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation.”

Bhakti: The Literature of Emotive and Evocative Spirituality

Ramanuja, Mahaprabhu Chaitanya from Bengal and Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya from Telangana brought a new awakening through Bhakti movement in the whole of India. The Bhakti movement brought a new synthesis of philosophy and literature. Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya’s Madhurashtakam is, perhaps, the most melodious musical poetry of Grace in medieval India in Sanskrit language. The poetry of Mahatma Surdas, one of his disciples, and that of Meerabai, Ravidas and other bhakti poets is the most emotive and evocative in the world. That poetry also carries the seeds of Vedic Upanishadic spiritual quest and the egalitarian and social activism of the Sramana-Vaishnava revolution.

Ramayana: Epic of Tulsidas

Mahatma Tulsidas carried the message of the Vedas and the Upanishads through his epic poem, *Ramacharitamanas*, a book regarded as sacred in every Hindu home in north India and in the homes of the Hindus of the far-flung Indian Diaspora spread over the globe.

The grace and beauty of the poetry of Mahatma Tulsidas is matched by the depth of his philosophy and humane ethics. He gave to the Hindu society the concept of *Maryada* and celebrated Lord Rama's life as the ideal life of the greatest hero upholding *Maryada*, the ethical norms and proprieties, which have been the binding force in the Hindu social, religious and political life. It was through literature once again that Mahatma Tulsidas expounded the Hindu philosophy of life.

Literature and the Renaissance

The poetry of the saint poets, notably the poetry of the poets of the disadvantaged and the ostracized classes, laid the foundation for a new God-oriented spiritual humanism in India and took it to every humble home and hearth through oral recitation and dissemination. Literature thus became a vehicle of thought on a mass scale. That literature also contributed to a deep sense of Indian identity and continuity; it also paved the way for the Indian Renaissance led by savants, social reformers, poets, writers, spiritual leaders and political protagonists of freedom such as Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Bharatendu Harishchandra, Balgangadhar Tilak, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Subramanayam Bharathi, S. Radhakrishnan, K.M. Munshi and a host of writers in all the national languages of India.

We might also mention by way of illustration a host of Hindi poet and writers who synthesized philosophy and literature including the philosophy and emotion of patriotism and national cultural renaissance: Maithili Saran Gupta, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Jaishankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma, Prem Chand, Jainendra Kumar, Yashpal, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Sacchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayana, Nagarjuna and many others Indian literature today is bursting at the seams and though it is written in different languages, it is one in the sense of shared sensibility, emotion and outlook. Dalit literature and women's literature have a distinctive identity. Dalits and women writers and many others who make common cause with them protest, resent, question and reject social exploitation and inequity, yearn for change and yet establish a linkage with the past and the future through philosophy and literary creativity in which we invariably find the genetic seeds and traces of Vedic and Upanishadic thought as well as the Sramana sense of compassion and ethical activism. □

Lokayata System

Indian philosophical thought, life and literature experienced and assimilated the epistemological and ethical challenges of atheism, skepticism, rationalism and sectarianism many centuries ago. The underlying premises of anti-religious secularism in its fiercest sharpness, was not unknown to our early ancestors. Nor were they unfamiliar with claims of materialism and hedonism. Indeed, India has a long and distinguished tradition of materialism, scepticism, agnosticism, atheism and hedonism. Perhaps, Brhaspati Laukya or Bharahmanaspati was the founder of Indian materialism. Sramana tradition, which did not subscribe to the theory of first cause and the idea of a creator, but by no means hedonistic, was dubbed as materialistic and atheistic. The name of Carvaka is widely associated with the Lokayata. He propounded the view that, in the beginning, being came out of non-being and that matter is the ultimate reality. The system of philosophy, which came to be referred to as Lokayata must have been well-known and must have commanded a considerable following as we find a profusion of attacks against it and allusions to it from the earliest times. Scathing attacks on the Lokayata system by philosophers propounding different viewpoints are unfortunately the only sources of information with regard to the teachings of the Lokayata system. Abusive indictments apart, it is clear that Lokayata philosophers were deprecated and reviled. The main criticism against the Lokayata system was that it aimed at Vitanda, or destructive criticism, without laying down a constructive philosophy of their own.

Max Mueller suggests that the celebrated hymn on frogs in the Vedas is a satire upon the system of Vedic hymn chanting and the Vedic priesthood. Some of the hymns, traditionally attributed to Brhaspati, the son of Loka, contain the earliest protests against a mere verbal recitation of the Vedas

and emphatically declare that it is more important to understand them than merely recite them. The hymn on frogs is in that sense an ironical and taunting expression of rationalism apropos ritual recitation. It appears that during the Vedic times and thereafter, the Lokayatikas constituted the main opposition to the Establishment.

Epistemologically, the Lokayata system emphasized direct perception of the senses and refused to admit any other authority whatsoever. According to the Lokayatikas, perception can only be in the present tense and it can only be direct. The Lokayatikas accepted only four elements, namely, earth, air, fire and water as the original principles of all things and rejected the ether as an element because ether cannot be known by direct perception. In its earlier stages, the Lokayata system did not even accept inference as a source of knowledge.

The epistemological creed of Lokayatikas led them to deny the doctrines of Karma and the phenomena of rebirth. They maintained that there could be no mind and no soul apart from the body and held the view that if there could be any soul, it existed so long as the body existed. Equally, they rejected the theory of fate and the theory of the existence of merits and demerits acquired in previous births. The Lokayata system derided religion and literally anticipated the Marxian dictum that religion is an opiate. Lokayatikas assailed worship and prayer as the resort of the weak and the misled; they discarded the Vedas as a source of authority. It was their contention that religious and ascetic practices and penances were merely a means to livelihood for men devoid of intellect and willpower. Their logic was as sharp as a rapier's edge. Their aptitude for logical disputation is reflected and summed up in the following passage:

"A putresti sacrifice, performed for the birth of a child, may not be followed by that event. When a child is born, the knaves say that it is due to the power of their incantations uttered in the course of the rite; and when a child is not born, they explain it as being due to the rite being incomplete in some way or other. The priests say that a beast slain in a sacrifice goes to heaven. Then how is it that they do not kill their own old fathers in a sacrifice in order to send them directly to heaven? If the offerings in a funeral ceremony can produce gratification to beings, who are dead, then in the case of travellers, when they start, it is needless to give them provisions for the journey. All these ceremonies are prescribed by the Brahmanas as a means to their livelihood and are worth no more than that. Hence, the endeavour to propitiate the gods through religious ceremonies and to satisfy them by prayers is vain and illusive. Religion is the invention of persons desirous of deceiving their fellowmen

in order to further their own selfish interests. There is no particular place named heaven; even the Vedas themselves doubt the existence of a world beyond. If a man goes to another world after death, why does he not come back, drawn by the love of his friends and relatives? When once the body is reduced to ashes, how can it go to the other world?"

The Lokayatikas were joined by Vratyas, both of whom challenged the authority of the Vedas, the sacrifices, the caste system and the ritualism. They stressed the theory of the Dehatmavada, which believes that the body is the self, and the theory of Swabhavavad which rejected the theory of causation and believed in the spontaneous generation of things according to their respective nature. The Visnu Purana perhaps refers to Lokayatikas or a cognate group of people when it describes a sect of people of very ancient origin who were free to live wherever they liked, unhampered by conventions, pure at heart and blameless in action, without virtue or vice, and living in an atmosphere of complete freedom without any inhibition of violating the dogmas of religion and the conventions of social usage. However, the Lokayata school, while rejecting the Vedas and the metaphysics, took considerable interest in Danda-niti (law and political science) and Vartta (Commerce) in addition to Kama which, to them, was the end-all and be-all of human life.

Indian cultural and social evolution rooted in Vedic thought accepted the emphasis on artha and kama but tended to reconcile artha and kama with Dharma and Moksha, often subordinating the former to the latter. It was perhaps the paganism and the hedonism of the Lokayatikas and the Vratyas, which had a leavening effect on our art traditions, which bound in the experience of creative joy through the senses. The Lokayatikas and Vratyas have no doubt disappeared from the mainstream of Indian cultural and philosophical thought but they seem to have richly fertilized it so that the insistent call of the ethereal sublimation and renunciation has not quite succeeded in an uprooting from the earthly life. The Lokayata system, as the religion of the national and the mundane, lost the battle against other Indian religious ideas; its negative rejection of religion was rejected by the mainstream Indian tradition, but its affirmation of life has often informed our aesthetic perceptions and enjoyments.

Indian social traditions and statecraft are familiar with the concept of equality of religions (Sarva Dharma Sammaan or Sama Bhava or Samanatva) rooted in Vedic and Sramana philosophy. The idea of secularism and Dharma-Nirpekshata is, however, based on the rejection of or indifference to religion in the denominational or theological sense. Between the two, there is a definite difference of approach and emphasis, if not a clear dichotomy.

Many of the formulations in Isopanishad, Kena Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Prashna Upanishad, Taittiriya Upanishad, and Aitareya Upanishad are similar and belong to the ambience of learning, teaching and research related to Truth and the Ultimate Reality, and are to be found, reflected and expounded in *Gita* which is the Upanishad of all Upanishads, the Scripture of all scriptures in the moral and spiritual consciousness of Hindus through the ages and representing a great watermark of philosophical literature.

The age of the Upanishads was the age of inquiry, it was the age of ceaseless and relentless quest of the great spiritual truths of the outer and inner space, it was the age, above all, of the moulding and firming of the Hindu ethos and way of life based on the reconciliation of the ancient Vedic and Sramana traditions of thought. It was an age of learning and teaching and of teaching and learning. Literature thus became the vehicle of philosophy. As a verse in Taittiriya Upanishad put it in the form of a fundamental precept:

“Do your duty; learn and teach.

Speak truth; learn and teach.

Meditate; learn and teach.

Control sense; learn and teach.

Control mind; learn and teach.

Kindle fire; learn and teach.

Feed fire; learn and teach.”

The Foundations of Hindu Ethos in Upanishads

Taittiriya Upanishad contains in its Eleventh Anuvac a quintessential convocation of wise precepts for the graduating class in the age of the Upanishads and gives us a glimpse of Hindu ethos formed by Philosophy and embodied and disseminated by Literature. Sri Aurobindo's translation of that Anuvac is as follows:

“When the Master has declared Veda then he gives the commandments to his disciple.

Speak truth, walk in the way of thy duty, and neglect not the study of Veda. When thou hast brought to thy Master the wealth that he desires, thou shalt not cut short the long thread of thy race. Thou shalt not be negligent of truth; thou shalt not be negligent of thy duty, thou shalt not be negligent of welfare, thou shalt not be negligent towards thy increase and thy thriving; thou shalt not be negligent of welfare; thou shalt not be negligent towards thy increase and thy thriving; thou shalt not be negligent of the study and teaching of Veda.

Thou shalt not be negligent of thy works unto the Gods or thy words unto the Fathers. Let thy father be unto thee as thy God and thy mother as thy Goddess whom thou adorest. Serve the Master as a God and as a God the stranger within thy dwelling. The works that are without blame before the people, thou shalt do these with diligence and no others. The deeds we have done that are good and righteous, thou shalt practise these as a religion and no others.

Whosoever is better and nobler than we among the Brahmins, thou shalt refresh with a seat to honour them. Thou shalt give with faith and reverence; without faith, thou shalt not give. Thou shalt give with shame, thou shalt give with fear; thou shalt give with fellow feeling. Moreover, if thou doubt of thy course or of thy action, then to whatsoever Brahmins be there who are careful thinkers, devout, not moved by others, lovers of virtue, not severe or cruel, even as they do in that thing, so do thou. Then as to men accused and arraigned by their fellows, whatsoever Brahmins be there who are careful thinkers, devout, not moved by others, lovers of virtue, not severe or cruel, even as they are towards these, so be thou.

This is the law and the teaching. These are the Commandments. In such wise shalt thou practice religion yea, verily, in such wise do ever religiously."

I should hasten to add that the word 'Religion' (or any of its equivalents) is not used in the original text. In the translation, Religion is meant to connote a virtuous way of life.

The key to the fulfilment of those precepts is found in the refrain and the concluding mantra of Taittiriya Upanishad which takes its inspiration from the Vedic Mantra of togetherness (Sangachhadhahdwam, Samvadadhwam, Samvomanansi Jaanataam):

"Let us gather together. Together may He protect us. Let us revel and relish together. Together He may rejoice in us and with us. Together we may energetically endeavour with courage and conviction. May our endeavour be filled with Light and Energy. May we never suffer from the maladies of jealousy and hate? May Peace prevail in the entire Universe. Ome Shantih, Shantih, Shantih."

The Vedic Upanishadic Sramana Synthesis

The three Vedic-Upanishadic concepts of Peace, Happiness and Well-being are equally fundamental in the ethos of the Sramana tradition of which Jainism and Buddhism are the two best-known branches. The Sramana and the Vedic traditions belonged together and to the same people. They interacted

in an intellectual and ethical discourse and were mutually cross-fertilized.

The cogitations in the Upanishads and in the later epics and those in the poetry and philosophy of saints, which shaped the Hindu view and way of life through many centuries, bear the profound imprint of the Jain and Buddhist traditions as well as many new social, philosophical and literary movements. Among those influences, which influenced Indian consciousness throughout its history, Vedic-Upanishadic philosophy and poetry occupied the pride of place. That poetry and philosophy had a unique sense of universality and kept its distance from sectarian and denominational rituals. That is why the Vedic-Upanishadic philosophical literature remained a source of common inspiration and universal acceptance; that is why the two branches of the Sramana tradition, the Jains, and the Buddhists, who deny the absolute authority of the Veda and reject the priestocratic ritual which came to be associated with it, nevertheless, acknowledged the true and ancient Aryan philosophy and culture of which they were an integral part; their caveat and contention was that the conception of Yajnya and some of the Vedic ritual and its paraphernalia were lapses of distortion whereas the Jain-Buddhist Sramana tradition represented the pure and pristine Aryan tradition sans the ritual.

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Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Independent India

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's place in the pantheon of India's freedom struggle is, by common consent, central and significant. By securing the integration of princely States within the Union of India, he became the principal architect of the new Indian State, which was, as he put it in the Constituent Assembly on 12 October 1949, unlike the scheme of 1935, not an alliance between democracy and dynasties, but a real union of the Indian people built on the basic concept of the sovereignty of the people. His historic achievement was unprecedented in its magnitude and is rightly acknowledged and celebrated as a glorious saga of statesmanship. His seminal contribution in the making of the Indian Constitution and more particularly, his leading and decisive role in fashioning the basic framework of fundamental rights is, however, not equally well-known.

Sardar Patel was the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Minorities and Fundamental Rights constituted by the Constituent Assembly by its resolution of 24 January 1947. The work of this Committee and that of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as its Chairman provided the bedrock foundation of Minority Rights and Fundamental rights in the Constitution, which guarantees the dignity of the individual, unity of the nation and fraternity of all Indians.

On 29 April 1947, Sardar Patel presented an interim report, which represented the initial groping and the emerging crystallization of basic ideas on fundamental rights in the Constituent Assembly. It also represented a bifurcation of justifiable and non-justifiable fundamental rights. While submitting the Interim Report, Sardar Patel emphasized the great importance of the justifiability of fundamental rights. He also stressed that fundamental rights should be uniform and universal in their binding character and

enforceability. It is interesting and significant that Sardar Patel felt even at that early stage (April 1947) that the freedom of trade, commerce and intercourse throughout the Union was fundamental to the fabric of Indian unity and basic rights. The Report became the pivot of the Fundamental Rights chapter in the Indian Constitution.

On 8 August 1947, Sardar Patel submitted an interim report on minority rights to the President of the Constituent Assembly. The subject was at once explosive and sensitive, but Sardar Patel handled it in a firm and lucid manner so characteristic of him. Although the controversy on minorities' rights had often been bitter and acute, the Report was the result of a large and liberal accommodation of minority's point of view. There were, however, conflicts of interests among the minorities and there minorities within the minorities. Both in the Advisory Committee and in the Constituent Assembly Sardar Patel facilitated discussions and decisions on minority rights in a friendly spirit and in an atmosphere of goodwill. The Report on Minorities Rights presented in August 1947 was postulated on the basis that there would be no separate electorates but that there would be reservation in representation for different minorities on a broadly demographically proportionate basis. The Report, proved to be infructuous because the entire perspective on minority rights underwent a sea-change. As Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant pointed out in the meeting of the Constituent Assembly on that very day, the Constituent Assembly could not ignore the tragic experience of separation.

The Interim Report of 8 August 1947 covered representation of minorities in legislature include question of joint versus separate electorate and weightage, reservation of seats for minorities in legislature reservation for minorities in the public services, and administrative machinery to ensure the safety of minorities rights. The Interim Report rejected the idea of separate electorates but recommended reservation for minorities for a period of 10 years. The Committee was opposed to any express vision for ensuring representation for minorities in Cabinets, but it felt that the desirability of such representation should be stressed in the Instrument of Instructions. Similar thinking found in the Interim Report in respect of representation in services. A proposal was also made that Central and the Provinces should appoint a special Minority Office charged with the duty to see into cases in which allegations also recommended the establishment of a Statutory Commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes.

In the debate on 28 August 1947, Sardar Patel was visibly and audibly annoyed with the scheduled caste demands for some sort of separate electorates. When Mr. Nazimuddin Ahmad repeatedly advanced his suggestions for

separate electorates for Muslims and said it was a "prayer on behalf of the younger brother to the elder brother". Sardar Patel thought he had enough. He said that in spite of ample sweet language used there was a full dose of poison in the method adopted. Sardar Patel said:

"If the process that was adopted which resulted in the separation of the country repeated, then I say: Those who want that kind of thing have a place in Pakistan. Here, we are building a nation and we are laying the Foundations of One Nation, and not choose to divide again and sow the seeds of disruption will have no place, no quarter here must say that plainly enough...."

Vehemently rejecting the idea of separate electorates, Sardar Patel once again said:

"You got the partition and now again you tell me and ask me to say for the purpose of the affection of the young brother that I must agree to the same thing again, to divide the country. For God's sake, understand that we have also got some sense. Let us Ponder the thing clearly. Therefore, when I say we must forget the past, I say it sincerely. There will be generosity towards you, but there must be reciprocity. If it is absent, then you take it from me that no soft words can conceal what is behind your words. I plainly once more appeal to you strongly that let us forget the past and let us be one nation".

When the Constituent Assembly of India met on the 25 May 1949, Sardar Patel presented another Report of the Advisory Committee. There was a visible contrast from the earlier Report. Summing up the situation, Sardar Patel said in the Constituent Assembly on 25 May 1949. "Now our object is, or the subject of this House should be as soon as possible and as rapidly as possible to drop these classifications and differences and bring all to a level of equality. Therefore, it is up to the majority community to create by its generosity a sense of confidence in the minorities; and so also it will be the duty of the minority communities to forget the past and to reflect on what the country has suffered due to the sense of fairness which the foreigner thought was necessary to keep the balance between community and community. This has creates class and communal divisions and sub-divisions, which in their sense of fairness, they thought to create, apart from attributing any motives. We on our part, taking this responsibility of laying the foundation of a free India which shall be and should be our endeavour both of the majority largely of the majority and also of the minority community, have to rise to the situation that is demanded from all of us, and create an atmosphere, in which the sooner these classifications disappear the better.... If they really have concluded honestly that in the changed conditions of this

country, it is in the interest of all to lay down real and genuine foundations of a secular State then nothing is better for the minority than to trust the good-sense and sense of fairness of the majority, and to place confidence in them. "So also it is for us who happen to be in a majority to think about what the minorities feel; and how we in their position would feel if we were treated in the manner in which they are treated. However, in the long run, it would be in the interest of all to forget that there is anything like majority or minority in this country and that in India there is only one community".

Intervening in the discussion on the Report of Minorities, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described the change perspective in the new Report as a historic turn in our destiny and characterized the motion moved by Sardar Patel as a historic motion. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru welcomed the recommendations the Advisory Committee headed by Sardar Patel in terms of nationalism. He said that he would be preferred to do away even with the limited reservations for 10 years. Replying to the debate in the Constituent Assembly Sardar Patel in his speech on 26 May 1949, said in plain and simple terms that there was no place in India for those who claimed separate representation. Referring to the mandate of the Muslim League in favour of an amendment in the Constituent for securing separate electorates for Muslim and other minorities, Sardar Patel said that the Constituent Assembly was not the place for acting on such a mandate and that the members had to act for the good of the country and in consonance with their conscience. He said, "Assuming that we are agreed today for the reservation of seats. I would consider myself to be the greatest enemy of the Muslim community because of the consequences of that step in a secular and democratic State." He also wanted the scheduled caste people to forget that they are scheduled caste and called upon all other citizen to practice the creed of equality. He said that India needed the atmosphere of peace and harmony, not of suspicion but of trust in order to grow and to build up the country on solid foundation. All amendments except the one regarding the reservation of seats and nominations for a period of 10 years were negative by the Constituent Assembly. It was a moment of glory and triumph for Sadar Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who had thus laid the constitutional foundations of Indian secularism, liberal republicanism and individual freedom.

The Advisory Committee on Minorities and Fundamental Rights constituted by the Constituent Assembly was sizeable body. Almost every shade and opinion was represented in it. To bring that Committee to a common consensus was in itself a notable achievement. Sardar Patel's authority as a statesman contributed in a very large measure to the sense of direction shown

by the Advisory Committee. Both in the Committee as well as in the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel showed a firm grasp of the subject, a perfect understanding of the first principles, a liberal and large-hearted accommodation, an extraordinary clarity of understanding and a sense of purposefulness. He had 'no-nonsense' attitude to the issues before the nation. He was at once fair and firm, pragmatic and idealistic. He had a clear awareness of the destiny of India as a free nation and of the task of national reconstruction. His belief to liberal democratic principles was unswerving and unqualified. There was no vagueness, ambiguity and no equivocation in what he saw, what he believed and what he said. Some of the lawyers of his age participated in the discussions in the Constituent Assembly but none seemed to pass him in clarity, simplicity, directness and forthrightness. The luster of his profound and trans-patriotism and integrity gave him a halo and an aura which made him one of the two great builders, the twin colossi who bestrode the Indian political scene immediately after the transfer of and the advent of Independence.

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The Great Philosopher: Dr. Radhakrishnan

Radhakrishnan put forth his vision of the Constitution in two profoundly significant speeches made in the first phase of the Constituent Assembly on 11 December 1946 and on 20 January 1947. His first speech was to congratulate to Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his unanimous and unopposed election as the permanent Chairman of the Constituent Assembly. After Acharya Kripalani and Maulana Azad had escorted Rajenbabu to the dais, the erudite and elderly pro tem Chairman Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha called upon Sir S. Radhakrishnan to be the first speaker on that memorable occasion, a measure of his pre-eminence and the high esteem in which he was held in the Assembly. Deploing the abstention of the Muslim League from the Constituent Assembly, he added gently, "We have been kept apart. It is our duty now to find each other." He stressed the common problems of the Indian people and observed:

"Take the problems from which we suffer: our hunger, our poverty, our disease, our malnutrition these are common to all. Take the psychological evils, from which we suffer the loss of human dignity, the slavery of the mind, the stunting of sensibility and the shame or objection. These are common to all: Hindus or Muslims, Princes or peasants. The chains may be made of gold but they are still chains that fetter us."

Sounding the keynote of Indian tradition, recalled the edict of the great disciple of Lord Buddha, Emperor Ashoka, who had said: "Samanvaya eva Sadhuh." Defining the nature and the texture of the Constitution and encapsulating its essential, he said:

"A Constitution is the fundamental law of the nation. It should embody and express the dreams and passions, the ideals and aspirations of the people. It must be based on the consent of all, and respect the rights of all people

who belong to this great land It is essential for any Constitution which is drawn up to make all the citizens realize that their basic privileges -- education, social and economic -- are afforded to them; that there will be cultural autonomy, that nobody will be suppressed; that it will be a Constitution which will be democratic in the true sense of the term, where, from political freedom we will march on to economic freedom and equity. Every individual should feel that he is proud to belong to this great land."

Radhakrishnan's speech on Aims and Objects Resolution in the Constituent Assembly on 20 January 1947 was another landmark. To appreciate the remarkable equipoise of that speech, one has to transpose himself to the complex setting of that juncture. Doubts, dismay and uncertainty afflicted Indian aspirations for freedom. The Muslim League was not prepared to cooperate. The British Government was equivocal. There were many who thought that the Constitution-making was an exercise in futility. There was flagging of faith in the future. Commending the Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru and endorsing its rationale, he lifted the spirits of his colleagues in the Assembly by his forceful and forthright advocacy of the declarations embodied in the Resolution, declarations which have become the sheet anchor of our Constitution. In forgettable words, he confronted and discounted those who were suspicious, wavering and hostile and who looked upon the work of the Constituent Assembly with all kinds of misgivings.

Radhakrishnan's speech on the national flag had a touch of poetry. According to him, the white in the very centre of the proposed Indian flag represents the sun's rays, the path of light, the light of truth and the way of transparent simplicity. The wheel virtue and the will to move explained that our Dharma is Sanatan, eternal not in the sense that it is a fixed deposit but because it has uninterrupted continuity. He also added that we could not say that we seek truth or practice virtue unless we scrap caste and untouchability. The Bhagwa, he explained signifies renunciation, for according to India's ancient traditions, all forms of renunciation are to be embodied in Raja Dharma. The green in the flag stresses our relation to the soil and the plant life and beckons us to build our paradise on this green earth.

On his appointment as India's ambassador to the USSR the Constituent Assembly took time to felicitate Radhakrishnan. By then, in the records of the Constituent Assembly, he was being described as Professor and not by his title of knighthood. Characteristically, perhaps with naive goodwill, the professor declared himself a devout adherent on what he called 'the knowledge solution' as opposed the 'the power solution' apropos the problems of the world. He was not oblivious of the stark realities of power politics but he

had the courage of his conviction to declare his fundamental faith, exemplifying the imagery of an age-old Indian literary and spiritual metaphor, a lotus in a pond of mud. Remarkably, the Indian ambassador in Moscow continued concurrently to be Spalding professor at Oxford, spending half the year at Oxford and half in Moscow. On the eve of his departure from Moscow, the exponent of 'the knowledge solution' met Stalin, the practitioner of 'the power solution', and patted him on the cheek and on the back and passed his hand over his head (a liberty he also took with Mao Tse Tung). The lonely dictator, who was feared as terror personified, said to him: "You are the first person to treat me as a human being and not as a monster."

Radhakrishnan appears to have been solely Nehru's personal choice for the office of Vice-presidency in the aftermath of certain sharp differences within the Congress Party relating to the choice of Rajenbabu as the first President of the Republic. Left to himself Nehru would not have given a second term to Rajenbabu and would have liked to install Radhakrishnan as President in 1957. That did not happen. Radhakrishnan continued as Vice-President. Nor was he prepared to accept a ministerial berth in Nehru's cabinet. In fact, he was preparing to leave Delhi for Madras when he was persuaded to accept a second term as Vice-President mainly because he learnt from Indira Gandhi that Nehru was quite upset of it. Politics was politics even in those days it was not all milk and honey. There were many pulls and pressures and personal and temperamental differences in the political happenings behind the scenes. There was also a lot of grace and dignity as well as mutual accommodation and self-restraint. Throughout, Nehru himself maintained a correct and respectful attitude towards the President. Dr. Radhakrishnan went on to tell the Senate common gavel that the common gavel was used by mason as an instrument to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the 'builder's use' and that the Free and Accepted Masons were taught to use it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices." The relationship between Rajenbabu and Radhakrishnan remained unimpaired. Radhakrishnan who had felicitated Rajenbabu on his election as the President of the Constituent Assembly and described him as the "suffering servant of India, of the Congress, who incarnates the spirit for which this country stands", said an affectionate homage to 'this simple and typical Indian' when he succeeded Rajenbabu. Radhakrishnan's first official act as President was a request Rajenbabu to accept the first award of Bharat Ratna.

During his fifteen years as Vice President and President, he made innumerable speeches on diverse occasion. There was always a message and a dimension of depth in what he said. There was deep humanity, compassion

and sincerity in his speeches. Some of these speeches in cold print can never mean to the present-day readers what they meant to us when we heard him speak. There was not only rhythm and resonance in the way he said, what he said, there was the great influence of his presence. I cannot quite explain this mysterious mesmerism of the great philosopher who cast a spell on us when he spoke. It was not merely his choice of words or his oratory. I think it was the glow of his spirit and intellect, which produced that magic effect. Once when I was asked to translate him at a mammoth public meeting of a largely Hindi knowing audience, I told him that he was difficult to translate and that in any case had a way of communicating his message by his very presence and style, rendering a translator superfluous. He smiled benignly like a teacher to a pupil, a relationship which had shaped itself spontaneously between us and which I cherish very much. That relationship began, in fact, when I was a student though he was not formally my teacher. Perhaps, I never graduated out of it. I remember the many occasions when I would visit him at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. More often than not, I would sit by his bedside and savour of freewheeling, wide-ranging conversations. Those conversations were the most enjoyable and instructive. I found that he kept himself fully informed of the debates in Parliament. Though he observed Parliamentary gamesmanship only from the high pedestal of a presiding officer and as President (who does not preside in Parliament) he enjoyed the give and take and the rough and tumble of parliamentary life. In his characteristic epigrammatic style, he told me once: "Parliament gives us a sense of proportion. It also gives us a sense of reality."

Dr. Radhakrishnan was obviously not a politician by vocation or by temperament. His approach and style had nothing of the politician. Far from being a shortcoming. I think it was his strength as a statesman. His not being a politician gave him detachment, enabled him to view events and efforts in larger and long-term perspectives, made his independence a great moral asset to the Republic and made him the authentic voice of the communities conscience. Mostly, politicians respect only power, in him they learnt to respect virtue and wisdom. He commanded intrinsic spontaneous respect not because of the political offices, he held but because he was who he was. He brought to bear on our national life the distilled essence of the greatest achievement of the human intellect and the deepest experiences of the human spirit through the ages. He made the seers and the sages, old and new, come alive. He dispelled the ivory tower image of isolation and alienation of scholarship. He made knowledge seem relevant and wisdom not a mystic oracle but an inspiring presence.

In his life and work, as a philosopher and a statesman, he reminded us vividly that:

“The great everlasting things that matter for nations, especially our own nation, are the peaks of wisdom, love and sacrifice which have come down to us from over forty centuries. As long as we carry in our hearts the image of these great peaks whose foundation is not shaken, though the earth may rock and say, our future is safe.”

“The common gavel was used by masons as an instrument to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder’s use and that the Free and Accepted Masons were thought to use it. For the more noble and glorious purpose of diverting our minds and consciences of all the vices.”

During his fifteen years as Vice-President and President, he made innumerable speeches on diverse occasions. There was always a message and a dimension of depth in what they said.

Radhakrishnan presided over the Rajya Sabha for ten years with a firm hand, in an independent, flexible and fair manner, and with a sense of humour. He commanded the obedience and allegiance of all sections of the House, including its stormy petrels, known for their irrepressible parliamentary resilience. His rulings as Chairman of Rajya Sabha remained beyond question and controversy. Experts were struck and amazed by his deep knowledge and fundamental understanding of constitutional and legal principles and of the history and ethos of the parliamentary system. When he was inducted as the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, consequent on his election as Vice-President, he recalled lightheartedly but meaningfully Lord Balfour’s statement that hell was probably a place where the only reading matter was the file of Hansard. He fulfilled his role creatively because he did not view it in a narrow perspective. He looked at the constitutional and parliamentary system as a part of democratic temper and culture. In 1954, while presenting an ivory gavel to the US Vice President who presides over the Senate, he linked deliberative democratic culture with the improvement and integration of human nature and with the advancement of social equality and economic justice. Quoting from the last letter, which Jefferson ever wrote, he reminded the Senate, “The mass of mankind was not born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God.” A compulsive researcher and philosopher, Dr. Radhakrishnan went on to tell the Senate.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan came to opt for the study of philosophy quite fortuitously when he was a young student of seventeen in the Madras Christian College, and was vacillating about the choice of the subject, a cousin of his

who took his degree that year, passed on his textbooks in Philosophy to him and that is what decided his future interests. There was destiny in that coincidence which made him the philosopher laureate of India. But philosophers have had no inherent claims to be 'Kings' or rulers except in Plato's Republic. In the Republic of India, however, Radhakrishnan rose to be Vice-President and President of India and was highly regarded as an elder statesman.

Radhakrishnan was by common consent a remarkable teacher, a profound scholar, an extraordinary exponent, an exceptional diplomat and a great statesman, but he was first and foremost a philosopher and a savant. In the world of diplomacy and politics, his intellectual effulgence and philosophical worldview endowed him with a unique stature because as a philosopher, he had recaptured and articulated the resurgent message of India's renaissance and had creatively synthesized diverse elements of tradition and modernity and of the East and the West.

Hearing and reading him, in those days before and after the advent of our Independence, was a profound experience, intellectual stimulation and integrating, emotionally invigorating, and spiritually refreshing. He gave thoughtful authenticity to the visions and dreams of our nascent Republic and helped to integrate the ancient and the recent past with the immediate future and the long-term perspectives. He adopted and reintegrated a deal of the Nehruvian set of ideas but he also provided an eloquent reinforcement with the logistics of an authoritative restatement of continuous and composite Indian tradition, philosophy, religion, culture and history thus became welcome tribunes to the new mainstream of our republic culture. No wonder, that in later years we would give Radhakrishnan the appellation of 'Rajguru.'

It was during the sowing season of our democracy and the early years of our Republic that Dr. Radhakrishnan had a rare opportunity to plant and nurture, his renaissance ideas. He made a quantitatively small but qualitatively significant contribution to Constitution-making. Those ideas helped to fashion and legitimize the Constitution as a document of the Indian People. Those are the ideas, to which he returned repeatedly as Vice-President and as President.

Sounding the keynote of Indian tradition, he recalled the edict of the great disciple of Lord Buddha, Emperor Ashoka, who had said:

"A Constitution is the fundamental law of the nation. It should embody and express the dreams and passions, the ideals and aspirations of the people. It must be based on the consent of all, and respect the rights of all people who belong to this great land It is essential for any Constitution which is drawn up to make all the citizens realize that their basic privileges – education, social and economic -- are afforded to them; that there will be cultural autonomy;

that nobody will be suppressed; that it will be a Constitution which will be democratic in the true sense of the term, where, from political freedom we will march on the economic freedom and equity. Every individual should feel that he is proud to belong to this great land."

Outlining the task before the Constituent Assembly, unfolding a blueprint of common destiny, and giving an inspiring expression to the 'idealist' view, Radhakrishnan said:

"We are told that we cannot effect revolutionary changes through peaceful methods, through negotiation and discussion in constituent assemblies. We reply that we have similar ends; we wish to bring about a fundamental alternation in the structure of Indian society. We wish to end our political and economic dependence, but those who are strong of spirit, those who are not short of sight, take their chances they make their change, here is a chance that is open to us and we wish to use this to find out whether it will be possible for us to gain the revolutionary ends by methods which are unusual so far as past history is concerned. We want to try whether it will not be possible for us to effect a smooth and rapid transition from a state of serfdom to one of freedom. That is the undertaking which this particular Assembly has on hand, we wish to tell all those who are abstaining from this Assembly that it is not our desire to establish any sectional Government. We are not here asking anything for a particular community or a privileged class. We are here working for the establishment of Swaraj for all the Indian people. It will be our endeavour to abolish every vestige of despotism, every heirloom of inorganic tradition. We are here to bring about real satisfaction of the fundamental needs of the common man of this country, irrespective of race, religion or community. If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, we cannot rally the people to our support. It is, therefore, essential that our bugle call, our trumpet sound, must be clear, must give the people a sense of exhilaration, must give the people a sense of exhilaration, must give the suspicious and the abstaining a sense of reassurance that we are here pledged to achieve full independence of India, where no individual will suffer from underserved want, where no group will be thwarted in the development of its cultural life. Therefore, I believe that declaration of objectives of this character is essential and it is not necessary for us to wait till this Assembly is fuller than it happens to be at the present moment."

Radhakrishnan took the Assembly to the ancient roots of India's republican and natural law jurisprudence, historically and philosophically. He argues that the republican tradition was not foreign to the genius of India. He reminded the Assembly that Panini, Megasthenes and Kautilya had referred

to the Republic of ancient India and that the Great Buddha belonged to the Republic of Kapilvastu. He stressed the moral doctrine of Dharma, analogous to the Greek concept of natural law, and said succinctly:

“Much has been said about the sovereignty of the people. We have held that the ultimate sovereignty rests with the moral law, with the conscience of humanity. People as well as kings are subordinate to that. Dharma, righteousness, is the king of kings.”

In the course of his speech, Radhakrishnan made a classic statement on the reconciliation of liberty and restraint and on the comingling of the spiritual and the material in the constitutional matrix. He said:

“There is also a reference to fundamental rights in this Resolution. It is a socio-economic revolution that we are attempting to bring about. It is, therefore, necessary that we must re-make the material conditions; but apart from remaking the material conditions, we have to safeguard the liberty of the human spirit. It is no good creating conditions of freedom without producing a sense of freedom. The mind of man must have full liberty to flower and mature and to grow to its fullest stature. The progress of man is due to the play of his mind, now creating, now destroying, always transmuting. We must safeguard the liberty of the human spirit against the encroachments of the State. While State regulation is necessary to improve economic conditions, it should not be done at the expense of the human spirit.”

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In the Season of Midsummer Madness

(A Fictional Narrative of an Unknown Bureaucrat)

My name proclaims the seven-star conjunction in the high heavens. My parents told me when I was a mischievous little prankster that seven is an auspicious number, they told me that a cluster of seven stars was named in Indian astronomy after seven great seers, that there are seven days in a week and seven horses who pull the solar chariot. I never quite liked my name and therefore had no urge to live up to its weighty antiquarian associations. I preferred to be a prankster all my life. To be honest for once, I am, by nature, contrariwise and I just cannot resist the temptation of being what I am. I have a feeling that the seven-star seers after whom I am named have done little for me. Far from being my guardian angels, they have neglected me as a surrogate child.

I always liked to think of myself as a favoured child of destiny but I missed too many opportunities too often to retain my balance. Perhaps, the astrological conjunction of seven stars in my name was ill-fated ab initio because seven stars, lie too many cooks spoiling the broth spoilt my broth because it was overcooked. I made a beeline for Lalu Prasad Yadav, the media hero of yesteryear. I vowed my allegiance to Laluji who is by common consent the fodder king of India. A few days before my impending retirement, I began brewing a concoction and offered it Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav. The next day, I flouted all the norms meant for nuts and bolts in the machine and transgressed all known thresholds. One media exposure after the other intoxicated me and I felt I was riding the crest of a wave. I enjoyed a few days of media glory but my family and friends looked at me with disapproval. My mentor and my source of inspiration Lalu Prasadjji was the only one who stood by me and bought my story when I was otherwise left in the lurch.

Raghuvanshji, the grey eminence of RJD, inflicted the unkindest cut. He showed no sympathy for me. Unfortunately, Laluji's advocacy of my cause proved to be a kiss of euthanasia for me. The redoubtable Arun Jaitley also reneged on his previous.

Much to the delight and pride of my family and friends, I embraced on my career as a nut and a bolt in the steel frame of India. I am not quite sure whether I was meant to serve more as a nut or as a bolt. Everyone saw me as a disgruntled 'nut and bolt' once I was screwed tightly into the steel frame. However, to be honest, I always felt like a nut who wanted to bolt. At the end of my many years of service and self-service and on the eve of my retirement from the steel frame, I realized the futility of my life and work as a nut. No wonder I became a nut case. My ambitions were already biting dust and my illusions of grandeur were taunting me. I had longed all my life to be a lever of power in the monstrous machine of politics and public administration. For reasons best known to the authorities, I never quite made it except when I fooled the venerable T.S. Krishnamurthy and the clever lawyer-turned-politician, Arun Jaitley to give me testimonials of competence. However, both those patrons failed me in the pursuit of my ambitions. Then I suddenly saw the writing on the wall according to which I was to fade away into insignificant shades of dark oblivion.

Frankly, I am an incorrigible narcissi. Indeed, all politicians and bureaucrats are my worldview and that world revolves exclusively round me. I admit I am extremely self-opinioned. I see nothing wrong in that I do not care for the sun if it does not light my cigarette. I would not mind casting aspersions on the sun, the moon and the stars if they do not serve my purpose. I care a tuppence for the service to which I belong.

When I was face to face with the nightmare of my retirement, the thought flashed on my mind that I must not lose the opportunity to take as many potshots as I could manage at the Election Commission and Chief Election Commissioner designate. I calculated that the publicity would make me famous overnight and land me into favourable confidential rating of me. Worse, still all my fellow details made me an outcaste, Hansraj Bharadwaj, who was my only hope, disowned and discarded me. The President of India and the Prime Minister of India pricked my bubble and virtually pushed me down the precipice. The world suddenly saw me as a treacherous bounder when my only fault was the combination of my ambition and opportunity, which invariably make the political tick and click.

What then are my options in the hostile world into which my seven-star seers have cast me away? I am no longer a civil servant in service. The

Congress-led government also denied me a comfortable quinoa berth or a sinecure despite the political service. I have rendered to an indispensable coalition partner namely RJD, with whom I have been working in tandem. Unfortunately, for me, Lalu Prasadji is not in a position to appoint me on a one-man commission on Godhra or as the chief Engineer of Accidents. I have no hopes from Govenror Buta Singh either. Perhaps, I ought to file a public interest petition with a prayer for the abolition of the Election Commissioner and in the alternative to appoint me as the Sole Election Commissioner in recognition of my patriotism and my self-created image of a true maverick. Patriotism and public interest are now my last refuge before I vanish into thin air and take my place as a lonely star among the seven seers. The Supreme Court should act suo motu before I pass into the oblivion of infamy or, and forced into an asylum. It would be worst if I am ignored and no one takes notice of me.

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Honouring Dr. L.M. Singhvi

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations have done a distinctive honour to an eminent jurist and a leader of the Indian bar Dr. L.M. Singhvi, by electing him unanimously as the Special Rapporteur on the subject of "the independence and impartiality of judiciary, jurors and assessors and the independence of lawyers throughout the world." In its Resolution, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations has asked Dr. L.M. Singhvi to prepare a Special Report for the world body and to make recommendations "to the end that there shall be no discrimination in the administration of justice and that human rights and fundamental freedoms may be maintained and safeguarded." The Resolution of the Economic and Social Council, which is an organ of the United Nations, has also requested the Secretary General of the United Nations to give the Special Rapporteur, Dr. L.M. Singhvi all the assistance that he may require in his work. The issue of the independence of the Judiciary and the legal profession is regarded in the human rights movement as the key issue, because lawyers and judges have emerged as an important bull-work of freedom and human rights. In certain countries, judges and lawyers have been subjected to serious persecution and victimization for espousing the cause of freedom. In a brief comment, Dr. L.M. Singhvi who is a former Member of Parliament and at present President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, said that he considered it as a great privilege to be called upon to propound the theme of the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession on a worldwide basis and to formulate his recommendations to the United Nations. Dr. Singhvi consults with the Governments of different member states as well as with lawyers, bar associations and judges from all parts of the world. It would be Dr. Singhvi's, task as Special Rapportuer to prepare a body of principles on independence

of judges and lawyers in National Legal Systems and in International Law, to draft a Code of Conduct and to propose an international covenant on internal and international safeguards for the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession. Dr. L.M. Singhvi has appealed to Indian lawyers, judges and other citizens to give him the benefit of their views.



Mahatma Gandhi Arrives in the Supreme Court of India

A pedestal has gone up in front of the Supreme Court to 'welcome' the Father of the Nation in the form of a massive bronze sculpture presented by India's High Commissioner in the UK Dr. L.M. Singhvi and to be unveiled by the Chief Justice Mr. Justice A.M. Ahmadi on 1 August, 1996. The sculpture shows Mahatma Gandhi sitting cross-legged in traditional Indian style and is the work of the renowned American sculptor Freda Brilliant Marshall whose bequest put it in the hands of the Indian High Commissioner. The sculpture is the exact replica of Mahatma Gandhi's large bust, which sits on a perch in Tairstock Square in London where the Indian community and British friends of India go at least twice a year to pay a floral homage. The sculpture came to the Indian High Commission by the sculptor's bequest, and it was decided to bring it to India since one of the two statues had already been installed in the UK. The Supreme Court agreed to install the sculpture in its grounds. Dr. Singhvi said he was happy to bring the beautiful sculpture of Gandhiji to India and to present it to the Supreme Court, an institution, which was dear to his heart and which stood on a high moral ground. He added that it was noteworthy that the sculptor belonged to America, the sculpture itself came from Europe, Mahatma Gandhi practiced law mainly in Africa and the statue was being erected in the supreme court of India. Permit me to congratulate you for the unqualified success of the Prime Minister's visit to the USA for which you have worked indefatigably and with a farsighted perspective and vision. You have worked hard in adverse weather conditions to cultivate the soil and to plant the seeds which promise a harvest of goodwill. The nation owes you an immeasurable debt of gratitude.

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Justice Krishna Iyer

Among the judges who made a difference in the ambience of India's justice system, two names occupy the pride of place. Those names are those of Justice Krishna Iyer and Justice Praful Bhagwati. They had the architectural vision, human compassion and social sensitivity to provide that leavening in the law, which fulfils the vision of law and mission of justice. We have had a galaxy of judges in our post-Constitution judicial history but those two names stand out prominently on the canvas of India's constitutional jurisprudence in the post-Independence era.

I have had the privilege of knowing both Justice Iyer and Bhagwati intimately for a long time. I knew of them for an even longer span of time. They brought a unique combination of creativity and compassion to the jurisprudence of India. It is that combination of creativity and compassion, which made a world of difference to the life of our law.

Justice Iyer returned to law after a distinguished stint in public life as both MLA and Minister which added immeasurably to his approach to public law. As a politician, he was always people-oriented. As a cabinet minister in Kerala, he had a Nehruvian outlook but he was deeply disillusioned when Pandit Nehru's government at the Centre superseded the State Government and imposed the president's rule. At the bar, he was known for his independence and originality as well as his persuasive advocacy and vast scholarship. Had he continued at the Bar, he would certainly have been at the top but his elevation to the Bench and his eventual arrival in Delhi was a gift of Providence to the nation's jurisprudence of social concern. His articulate and outraged voice in protest against the president's rule in Kerala was unforgettable. It is remembered that his judgments as a Judge of the Kerala High Court, forceful, considerate original, compassionate and thoughtful. His logic was razor sharp

and his thinking was invariably heartwarming, glowing with humanity and compassion. He wielded the authority of a judge gently and leavened justice with the milk of human kindness. I remember the time when Latin Maxim prominently displayed on the wall of the First court in the High Court at Kochi, which declared in effect the duty and the determination to do justice even if the earth were to split and the skies were to fall. Justice Iyer administered justice without making the earth split and without making the skies fall.

He was a progressive problem-solving judge. As a judge he represented the spirit of the horizon, which as the Sanskrit equivalent of the word (kshitij) suggest means that which is born of the terra-firma of reality and the sky of idealism. A remarkable synergy of compassionate realism and purposeful intellectual creativity worked through him in India's jurisprudence giving a contemporary meaning to the Vedic concept of Earth-Sky Conjoint (Prithvirdyava and Buddhist concept of Prajnya and Karma Conjoint a combination of Intellectual and compassion). The Krishna Iyer School of jurisprudence proved to be a catalyst of conscience in our outlook on law. Law is what Law does. In my opinion, that would aptly describe Krishna Iyer's vision and agenda jurisprudence. Not for him the prison house of the strict constructionist.

Not for him the narrow, static and orthodox ways of looking at law and society. As a judge and a jurist, he never allowed humanity and the social purpose of law to be sentenced to solitary confinement to be pushed to the oblivion. I vividly recall his arrival in Delhi, his visit to my home and his luminous presence burst on the national scene as a law reformer, as an exponent of legal aid and as a man in whom We the People found our voice, our aspirations, our anguish and our views. I was happy to be a fellow traveler with him following the conjugal pilgrimage of Law and Justice. Justice Iyer and I were partners in the national enterprise of launching legal Aid. A few years before the committee on Legal Aid was appointed by the Government of India under his chairmanship, I had chaired the National Convention on Legal Aid inaugurated by the President of India and had launched the movement for legal aid with Justice Iyer's association and his wholehearted and enthusiastic support. That civil society movement culminated in legally mandated imperatives under the inspiring leadership of Justice Iyer. Associated with us, in that great enterprise was Shri Jaisikhlal Halhi, Dr. Madhav Menon and a host of lawyers, judges and academics. The legal aid movement emancipated Law from its conventional strict constructionist grooves of thinking and interpretation into which the Supreme Court had let it lapse and languish. Justice Iyer and Justice Bhagwati were to expound that point of view in their

landmark judgments consistently and to create a new spirit of Justice in the House of Law. Both Justice Iyer and Justice Bhagwati shared my vision of the Law Day and together we drafted and created the Law Day Charter. Together we prevailed upon the doubting Thomase. Together we chose the 26 November as the Law Day. In the bench in the Supreme Court, he was always courteous, attentive, conscientious and soul searching.

Humility, purity of heart, clarity of mind and originality of thought and perspective were his hallmark. He prevailed with a persuasive effortless ease with his colleagues on the bench and the members of the bar. As a Judge, he had an open mind, a courteous and not a condescending spirit of inquiry. A dialogue with him across the bar was always instructive and edifying. He would never be adversarial or adamant, though he was firmly rooted in his predilections. He was reasonably predictable, never summary or shortly tempered. There was a spirituality in his mind and approach and about him that had a magnetic charm all its own. That is what makes the brilliant judge a great human being or a great human being a brilliant judge. There were occasion when he cried because of his predilections but there was a redeeming nobility and grace even in his errors. Enshrined in the Law Reports are his many-splendoured contributions to India's jurisprudence, which speak for themselves. Even a doctoral thesis, much less this brief article can ever do full justice to Justice Iyer. However, as I said as president of the Supreme Court Bar when Justice Iyer retired, the Bar is indeed the ultimate judge of judges and the Bar would judge Justice Krishna Iyer as a judge of great substance, deep humanity, profound and sound scholarship and a dynamic sensitive attitude to law and justice. I believe he was a lighthouse in the endless voyage of our law in the quest of justice, an inspiring pathfinder, a Rishi for the contemporary and futuristic evolution of law. We owe him a collective tribute for what he is and what he has achieved for us all.

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The Brilliance of Justice Krishna Iyer

By interpreting Article 21 of the Indian Constitution Justice Iyer's Bench directed the State to provide free legal services to accused person in custody. Indeed, his profound contribution to prison jurisprudence in a few criminal cases had given shape to re-humanization of the sentencing system in India. The Reformatory theory, in contrast to deterrence theory, becomes deep-rooted in the criminal justice system in the wake of the landmark rulings of Justice Iyer. While a larger Bench of the Supreme Court of India had upheld the constitutionality of death sentence, Justice Iyer imposed stern conditionalities making death penalty a sentencing rarity. One of his rulings, on the subject (Rajendra Prasad Singh's case) was followed by Lords Scarman in the judicial committee of the Privy Council in Westminster. The jurisprudence of bail was humanized by Justice Iyer and this has been a lasting contribution to the liberation of under trial prisoners. In an International Conference of abolition of death penalty, he was invited to deliver an inaugural address by the 'Amnesty International' in 1977. In the matter of sentencing, Justice Iyer's innovative experiments have been acclaimed. Following some decisions of the trial judges of the US and emphasizing the importance of the correctional process in making the learned judge even directed convicts to undergo meditational courses.

On 1 November 1915, was born in Malabar, as the son of V.V. Rama Iyer, a great trial lawyer on the West Coast of India, Shri. V.R. Krishna Iyer who spiraled up to become, if one may borrow a Supreme Court idiom, (India) one of those rarest of rare individuals, blending in himself, in mellow measure, activism with restraint, politics with principle, scholarship with humanism, and daring with dedication. An able lawyer on the trial and appellate side, successful in the civil, criminal and constitutional jurisdictions, he surpassed

as a creative legislator, while sitting on the opposition side in the Madras Legislature and a dynamic member in the Government of Kerala, after the formation of that State, managing with versatile excellence, portfolios so divergent as Law, Justice, Home, Irrigation, Energy, Social Welfare plus. After that ministerial career, he was back at the bar and later, on the Bench he was a unique robed phenomenon imparting new dimensions of compassionate humanism to the rule of law and avant-garde direction to the judicial process, with fine tuned functional innovations and firmly fixed focus on the humblest, harrowing sector of the Indian people. As minister, his multifaceted talents and administrative mastery gave radical opportunities to magnetize the common people into the centre stage of participative development. His spiritual vision illuminated his materialist mission and fuelled his tireless striving, geared to good governance and social justice. His stormy ministerial tenure, between 1957 and 1959, facing novel challenges and achieving epic successes, remains unrivalled and, perhaps, is an untold story. Leaving the Treasury Bench, he rose to the top at the Kerala Bar and was elevated to the Bench in 1968. His tenure as lawyer made him a dauntless advocate with crimson commitment. Soon on the Bench of Kerala High Court, he began his luminous tenure as Judge and, before long he arrived in Delhi as a member of the Central Law Commission.

The first ever National Project for Free Legal Services to the poor was a report on Processual Justice to the people by a high-powered committee headed by Justice Iyer. In the field of legal aid his committee's report was the first National Presentation of a project for free legal services in the country, back in 1973. His trust with destiny had to be redeemed by an ampler national adventure in the service of Indian humanity through nobler hermeneutical radicalism and original strategies of legal process. Indeed, the finest hour of the Supreme Court was then Justice Iyer, along with a companionate team, transformed Indian Jurisprudence and democratized the Judicial Process, what with public interest litigation, processual affirmative action and forensic defence of human rights and lawyers' services at state expense, blossoming in the Justice system. It is difficult to comprehend or condense his marvellous contributions to our judicature and its vast potential for delivering right justice and commanding the most powerful and corrupt to surrender to justice. "Be you ever so high, the law is above you, be you ever so small, the law will befriend you"—this rule of law and life become a reality during his time. Suffice it to say, there is no Indian judge till date, living or dead, on whom two or three doctoral theses have been written by scholars in different universities. Justice Krishna Iyer has that distinction. The stay order in the

Indira Nehru Gandhi Election appeal made his name glow globally and so did his vibrant and humanitarian perspective and socially sensitive perspicacity show up on the high bench in every pronouncement of his charming and challenging diction. This was no judicial serendipity after taking his seat on the Summit Court. It was but a curial application of his life's motto, which he has several times emphasized: "I am a human being and nothing which affects any human is alien to me".

His lofty vision is demonstrated by Justice Iyer's ceaseless, militant, variegated involvement in a vistarama of social issues and jural problems without fear or favour or surrender to political pressure. After he retired from the Supreme Court in November 1980, a new era of nearly two decades of long battle against injustice, corruption, pollution and abuse of power, existing the temptation of judicial commissions, lucrative consultations and other offices and establishment-blandishments, has been his austere post-superannuation sojourn. But he was ever positive, ever constructive, totally secular, essentially socialist, although he once reflected on his own life as the home of lost causes, forsaken beliefs, people-oriented campaigns and spiritually charged mission to make the New World Human Order a wee-bit better. With no inhibitions, he criticized justly, supported the suppressed and made no bones about being opposed to authoritarian, power drunk, party-intoxicated or Big Business bosses. Being wholly conscientious and holistic in his approach to human justice, he hardly hated anyone and few hated him. He touched none, which he did not adorn. On him, leading lawyer F.S. Nariman is reported to have once said: "When Krishna Iyer speaks, the nation listens". On another occasion, the same doyen of the Indian Bar observed, "Some judges are compared to tall oak trees but it is only the tallest oaks – like a Denning in the UK, or a Krishna Iyer in India -- who can indulge even with some success in that delicate and unpredictable exercise of laying down the law in accordance with justice." Many great lawyers and judges have showered encomiums on him after his retirement. Shri Soli J. Sorabjee, presently the Attorney General of India, wrote a few years back: "Mr. Krishna Iyer has a heart whose natural generosity and glowing warmth would scorch out any trace of malice or meanness. He cannot nurture a grudge towards any one, including unkind critics who have approached him with singular lack of humanity and understanding and who in learned have raged and raged against the spreading of the light. Like Newman's True Gentleman, he had too much good sense to be affronted by insults and was too well employed to remember injuries. Nothing rankled more in his kind heart than confronting injustice. To him law was the means, the instrument to secure justice. In addition, if in

this noble quest he crossed the rigid legalistic frontiers, so be it. He is in the good company of Earn Warren and Lord Denning and other bold judicial spirits whose judicial unorthodoxy has ultimately led to the advancement of justice and the promotion of fundamental freedoms". Corruption, now the worst enemy of Indian Public life, environmental pollution, now the greatest disaster of India's development and political gambles in the most adventurous Bharat, were betenoire for Justice Iyer. He restlessly protested, detested, dissented, whenever a wrong was one anywhere, big or small. That puissant Iyer stream still flows on, regardless of age, and thus he has become a national institution for the Indian victims to reach and fight for justice. Justice Iyer has crusaded against exploitation by multinational corporations and continues to do so. His perennial pen and profound tongue are still active. He is president or patron of several social, legal and human rights organizations. Indeed his phenomenal personality is draped in simplicity and sapient Gandhian thought. He lives a lonely life, with all his burning rage against injustice. His great partner Sarada, an integral part of him, passed away 25 years ago and yet poignantly he feels the pain of the wound and looks at life after death as an investigative issue and larger vision. A Rotarian in spirit, every call of his soul is vibrant with the values and ideals of Rotary.

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Achievements of Justice Krishna Iyer

He delivered the following lectures:

Ambedkar Memorable lectures under the auspices of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and Madras University.

Allady Krishna Swamy Iyer Memorable lecture, Hyderabad.

Lecture in the Andhra University Waltair (Andra Pradesh State, India).

Megachand Mahajan Memorial Lecture in the Punjab University and another in Delhi.

Bhimson Sanchar Memorial Lecture in Delhi.

Justice Iyer has delivered many prestigious lectures including the Tagore Law Lectures on Human Rights (Calcutta University). He has travelled to many countries and places like Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, USA, UK, Canberra, Geneva, Stockholm and Brussels. His addresses in Dhaka and Karachi at the SAARC Law Conference are memorable. He delivered an important lecture on Victimology in Adelaide in Australia and he is an activist in Victimology.

Participation in Social Organizations and Professional Bodies

Founder of a variety of social and professional organizations and guided the working of several of them at different periods.

Founder Secretary, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Tellicherry.

Member, Central Animal Welfare Board, Madras. President, Kerala Hockey Association.

President, Kerala Fine Arts Society, Cochin.

Member, Kerala State Sports Council and Chairman of the Committee which reported on the development of sports and games in Kerala.

Vice-President, The Foundation for the establishment of an International Court of Criminal Justice, Massachusetts.

Founder President and now Patron of the Sri Narayana Kendra, New Delhi.

President, The Kathakali Centre, New Delhi. President, The Kerala Club, New Delhi.

President, The Malayali Association, New Delhi.

Patron of the Indian National Section of the International Association of Penal Law, with Headquarters in Paris.

Vice Chairman, Animal Welfare Board of India. President, Institute of Socialist Legal Studies.

Vice President, International Association of Democratic Lawyers. Member, Central Prohibition Committee, Government of India. Vice-President, Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies. Member of Faculty of Law, Board of Aligarh, Kerala & Calicut Universities.

Member, Executive Committee, Indian Council of Social Science Research.

Hon. Member, American Association of Judges. President, Indian Society of Criminology.

Vice-President, Indian Society of International Law. President, Indian Institute of Natural Law.

Patron, The Madras Institute of Magnetobiology.

Member, Board of Trustees, Ved Vignan Maha Vidya Peeth, Bangalore.

Trustee, S. Mohan Kumaramangalam Charitable Trust.

President, Organization for Protection of Human Rights in Sri Lanka. Member, Governing Council, The Brahma Vidyalaya Society, Varkala. Patron, Punjab Prisoners Welfare & Human Rights Association, Jalandhar.

Chairman, National Centre for Quality of Life & Work, Hyderabad. President, Krishna Menon Memorial Society, New Delhi. President, Kerala Law Academy & Centre for Advanced Legal Studies, Trivandrum.

President, KPS Menon Memorial Society, New Delhi. Member, Faculty of Law, University of Kerala.

President, Indian Council of Social Welfare, Kerala State Branch. Chairman, Indian Peoples Human Rights Tribunal.

President, Indian Association of Lawyers. Executive Patron, All India Lawyers' Union.

Member, Presidium of Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, National Council. Chairman, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras.

Executive Patron, Indian Council of Legal Aid & Advice.

President, Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights & Secularism
New Delhi.

Chairman, National Expert Committee of Women Prisoners.

Chairman, National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on
Construction Labour, New Delhi.

President, Forum of People's Voice, Cochin. President, World Council
of Deontology, Paris.

President, Citizen's Action Committee for Clean Politics.

Member, Sponsorship Committee, International Centre for Trade Union
Rights.

Chairman, Watchdog Committee, Kerala.

Visiting Professor, National Law School, Bangalore.

Patron, All India Dalit Development Research Institute, Lucknow.

President, Centre for Industrial Safety & Environment Concerns,
Quilon.

Patron, Indo-Socialist States Friendship Organization, Madurai. Member,
Steering Group On Social Welfare Set Up by The Planning Commission,
India.

Honorary Patron, The Management Professional Association, Madras.
Member, Advisory Committee, General Encyclopedia, The State Institute of
Encyclopedic Publications, Trivandrum.

Chairman, Steering Committee on Decentralized Planning, 8th Five
Year Plan, Kerala.

Chairman, Sub Committee for establishment of a School of Indian Legal
Thought in the Mahatma Gandhi University.

Chairperson, National Campaign for Heresing Rights, Calcutta.

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The Great Jagdish Swarup

Thanks to the late Pandit Kanhaiyalal Mishra and Shri K.N. Singh, I had the privilege of Shri Jagdish Swarup's acquaintance in Allahabad long before he arrived in Delhi as the Solicitor General of India. After he came to Delhi, our daily contact and bonds of personal relations grew. Many years senior to me in age and professionally, I loved to sit and chat with him. He was gentle as gentle can be. Humility was his hallmark. I loved to hear him when he was in a pensive and reminiscent mood on the good old days of the glory of Allahabad. He had worked with like Shri Pyare Lal Benerji, Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Shri M.C. Setalved. Whenever we were free between cases we would sit together in the Bar Library, for insatiable was my appetite for his recollections of life and law. In Allahabad, we had appeared in many cases for opposing clients before he came to Delhi. He was invariably and at all times the gentleman lawyer, gentle, courteous, persuasive, patient, resourceful and persevering. His style was quite industrious and urbane. Advocacy was uniquely; never did he raise his voice in the court or outside. Both in Allahabad High Court and in the Supreme Court we had judges who were prone to assume an adversarial posture and raise the decibel level of their voices in the court. Shri Jagdish Swarup's response was characteristic. He kept cool and always responded quietly. His cool and calm response often worked as a silent rebuke. Faced with that kind of predicament, I found it difficult to emulate his example. On one occasion, I had to tell the judge that when he raised his voice, it became an unequal discourse because it would be disrespectful if I also raised my voice. Jagdish Swarupji appreciated my observation, but I think he had a better, more tranquillizing remedial medicine in his pharmacopoeia.

To know Jagdish Swarupji was to realize the rationale of our profession

being described as a learned profession. He had a large library of books of law, literature, philosophy, religion, art and culture. He was a scholar of literature and philosophy and comparative religions. He was himself a voracious reader in depth who chewed and digested and internalized what he read. We shared many interests in common, particularly an interest in Kabir and his life and work. However, after discussed on Professor Ram Kumar Varma's study of Kabir's mysticism as both of us know him. We often discussed the finer points of the philosophy of Adi Shankarayacharya and the texts of certain Upanishads. He was also a scholar of Persian with which I was extremely unfamiliar. I experienced the grace of his heartfelt blessings when I periodically presented to him volume after volume. Some 20 of 23 volumes on the Vedas published by Veda Prathisthan, which I had founded. He was one of the few members of bar who shared my love of the Vedas and the Upanishads as well as the Sramana and Bhakti traditions.

Another interest and commitment we shared was in respect of Hindi. For years, he had rendered yeomen service in the cause of Hindi as the receiver of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. We combined our efforts with those of Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi and Pandit Kanhaiya Mishra although we failed to rescue the Sammelan from the radioactive fallout of internecine warfare.

Jagdish Swarup preferred Allahabad to Delhi and returned to law practice in Allahabad. While in Allahabad, he fell ill seriously. Doctors gave up hope. When I learnt about his illness and suggested that he should be brought to Delhi. Critically ill he came to my home. I took him to AIIMS and fortunately, senior specialists at AIIMS were able to save his life. I was deeply in his debt that he thought of me and my house in that critical situation. Later whenever I went to Allahabad, he would recall the episode with an affectionate feeling which suffered and enveloped me forever in a relationship.

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Chinmaya Mission: A Confluence of Jnana and Bhakti

In the spiritual heritage of India, Jnana and Bhakti are, in the ultimate analysis, two sides of the same coin. Jnana is the domain of rishi parampara, which is the philosophical tradition of seers and sages of self-realization. Bhakti is the domain of saints and sages of devotion and emotive dedication. Jnana and Bhakti are not compartmental dichotomies: they often coalesce. Bhakti gave rise to sant parampara in the quest of self-realization. Through great rishis and great saints, the traditions of Jnana and Bhakti brought light and glory of fulfilment to the eternal quest of the human soul, particularly on the Indian soil. In that quest, Jnana is Bhakti and Bhakti is Jnana. There is Sat Chit and Anand permeating Jnana as well as Bhakti. In my view of the panoramic perspective of Indian spirituality and ethics and the Hindu way of life, Bhakti is the Upanishad of perennial spirituality in commonly understood and accessible language of people.

The saints of the Bhakti tradition experienced the blissful joy of Jnana and carried the common people with the uplifting spiritual thought and emotional experience and the seers of the Jnana tradition experienced that same blissful joy of truth in pure consciousness. There is a profound subterranean unity of *Anubhuti* and *Ananda* in Jnana and Bhakti, which are invisibly, intimately and inextricably intertwined for Jnana and Bhakti are both dimensions of inner experience. Bhakti represents the rich tapestry of that inner experience in which intellect and emotions are the warp and woof of divine presence in the inner and outer space so that the boundaries of inner and outer space are obliterated and belong to the same divine domain that is spiritual Advaita at its sublime and lofty summit and in its oceanic depths to which great masters like Rama Krishna Paramhansa, Swami

Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Chinmayananda and Swami Ranganathananda consecrated their lives of sadhana and self-realization.

The great rishis of our Vedic and Vedantic antiquity and Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Thakur Robindranath, Paramorcharya Chandrasekhar Saraswati, Swami Chinmayanandji and Swami Ranganathanandaji constituted the pantheon galaxy of spiritual wisdom in the 19th and 20th century. They created the confluence of Jnana and Bhakti in the Rigveda-Saamveda tradition, which transforms sounds into words of divine devotion and words into celestial devotional poetry and music.

We should recall the stirring and soul-searching words of Swamiji in his Bhakti-Sandhya Message of 1988 in which he said that Bhakti meant total surrender to the protector and sustainer of the Universe. He explained the process of sound with a meaning becoming words, and words becoming poetry, and poetry making up the cadence of music. Of Bhakti-Sangeet, Swami Chinmayanandji said:

“When music is employed by a devoted heart of a saintly person, it lifts the listener’s heart to new realms of consciousness. To listen to music, adoring the divine, with a worshipful heart, by a deeply devoted person of character and dedication is to transport all devoted hearts listening to it, most effortlessly, in a pleasant spontaneity, into an ecstasy of an inexplicable state of bliss and beatitude.”

There is, in that observation, a moving message for us all from Swamiji on Bhakti-poetry, Bhakti Sangeet and Bhakti Pravah inspired by saints and seers of India’s devotional transcendence and made fragrant by his own unique alchemy of the synthesis of Jnana and Bhakti. First and foremost, he asks us to listen to our saints who experienced the truth and reached the innermost recesses of self-realization through singing their hearts to Him in Bhakti and who spread the quintessential message of Jnana through their Bhakti and their exploding (or imploding!) music which was sung through them by the very angels of the heaven. That is in my humble view the best approach to the understanding and interpretation of the confluence of Jnana and Bhakti in the mainstream of Indian spiritual heritage of the ceaseless striving of the questing soul.

The devotional song of Indian heritage has a nirguna as well as saguna resonance. It reminds us of the unique Vedic concept of earth-sky conjoint (prithvi-dyawa) and that is why an Indian listening to Appaar, Thyagaraja, Kabir, Tulsi, Surdas, Meerabhai, Baba Farid, Guru Nanak, Jaydev, Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Amir Khusrou, Bulle Shah, Guru Arian Deva, Guru Teg Bahadur, Jnaneswar, Eknath, Namdeva, Tukaram

Samartha Ramadas, Swami Haridas, Tansen, Nunda Rishi, Lal Dēd, Vidyapati, Narsi Mehta, Shankardeva, Purandardas, Dadu, Raskhaan, Andal Periyalvar and a shining array of a host of other saints of India's trackless Bhakti tradition is effortlessly attuned to that inherited and embedded resonance, the seeds of which have sprouted and blossomed in Sumiran (Hari-Smaran), Satsang and Sankeertan (Lord's Remembrance and Adoration, and Praise of and Prayer to the Lord). The sublime Himalayan thoughts of our sages and seers, like the Himalayan and other mountain rivers have reached the people of India at all levels and in all walks of life through the philosophical poetry (both nirguna and saguna) of our saints in melody and rhythm.

The Bhakti Movement came as the pure stream of Ganga from the heights of snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas of Vedic and Vedantic thoughts and meditation which had its inevitable impact on the vaishnava tradition as well as the Jain Sramana tradition to enrich the life of the people and to transmit to them the values of equality, justice, compassion, equity, philanthropy, humanity, goodness and humanitarian service. In an age afflicted by obscurantism, orthodoxy, fatalism, subjugation, defeatism, helplessness, escapism, exploitation, oppression, and political, religious, cultural and social onslaughts, the Bhakti movement in the north and the south, the east and the west of India became the greatest synthesizing force, which cleansed and corrected Hinduism and strengthened and emboldened the foundations of Indian ethos. The Bhakti tradition, which was a great equalizer, was also a questioning and protesting tradition. It was a Civil Society tradition, a people's movement which had a resilience all its own. It survived the slings and arrows of many misfortunes and the fanaticism of zealots like Aurangzeb and the extreme intolerant hordes of his ilk. Bhakti infused by Jnana was on its own a freedom movement and a moral rearmament movement of the people of India, a movement which ingathered Raja and Praja, Muslims and Hindus, Harijans and tribes, the rich and the poor alike. It brought together vaishnavas, Shaivites and Shaaktas through commingling and communion beyond and above their old internal and intra-denominational feuds. The Bhakti movement brought the south and the north, as well as the east and the west and the opulent palaces and the poorest cottages of India together and bonded them in a way nothing else had succeeded in doing, until in a later age, the great apostles of Rashtrabhakti and Manavbhakti Dadabhai Nauroji, Lokmanya Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Subrahmaniam Bharati, Rabindranath Tagore and Maithili Sharan Gupta forged a new national alliance based on the cultural foundations of the Bhakti movement which culminated and blossomed into a great national Renaissance. The National

Song, *Vande Mataram*, Swami Vivekananda's 'immortal words' in Chicago in 1892, Sri Aurobindo's *sadhana* and Mahatma Gandhi's *Vaishnava Jana to tene kahiya jo pir parayi Jane re*, and Tagore's *Anthem of Mother India*, are the finest flowers of that Bhakti Renaissance. The concept of Daridranarayan based on social and economic justice is also a dimension of Rashtra Bhakti and Manav Bhakti. Indeed the constitutional concepts of Secularism, Justice, Equality, Liberty, Freedom, Integrity of the Nation, Dignity of the Individual and Fraternity of We the People of India are culturally and conceptually rooted in the Bhakti Movement, which saw myriads of gardens and millions of flowers grow and glow. I regard *Geetanjali* of Gurudev Thakur Rabindranath as the apotheosis and the treasure chest of Bhakti, the flow of which has watered and irrigated the parched and arid zones of India through the most critical period of Indian history and was reinforced by Jnana, which proved to be the catalyst and the hallmark of cultural continuity of Indian life and heritage.

Chinmaya Mission is the confluence pilgrimage, Sangama Tirtha, of Jnana and Bhakti in the timeless flow of Indic heritage where we celebrate the quintessentially questing spirit of striving and aspiring in the sacred punyabhoomi of India. That is why we call our festival Jai Barati, we may also call it Jai Bhakti Bharati. That Bhakti spirit embraces India as a whole and indeed extends to Humanity as One Family. It is not confined, constricted, crabbed or cramped by linguistic boundaries and territorial demarcations. It is a holistic homage and celebration of seers, saints and singers of the soulful songs of India, through which runs the Vedic-Vedantic, Sramana, Vaishnava, Shaiva and Shaakta traditions of Jnana and Bhakti. The streams are many, the ocean is one.

Chinmaya Mission proudly proclaims the beauty and grace of each stream and the depth of the great ocean. Each of those streams has a common Indian hallmark, no matter where it originates, where it flows, and where it joins the great ocean. That commonality defies chronology and transcends geography and linguistic diversities. It verily demonstrates the fundamental unity of India and its unity in all its diversities, which we celebrate in our transparent sense of Indian unity, rooted in the Vedas, the Vedanta, Sramana and Shaiva, Shaakta, Vaishnava spirituality. I find the resonance and reverberations of Vedic hymns and Vedanta discourses watered, cultivated, nurtured and personalized through each saint poet and each Nadapasaka in the long panorama of Bhakti tradition.

Manikavachakar, Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Adi Shankaracharya (although Adi Shankaracharya, according to Kanchi tradition lived before the Christian era) gave expression to the fundamental truth expounded in

the Vedas and the Upanishads. Their Tiruvacakam, thevaras and lyrical compositions were remarkable for their insights, deep devotion and commanded universal respect and had household popularity and reverence. That was the period in and around the epoch of Adi Shankaracharya (if the routinely accepted date of birth and span of life is assumed to be correct) who was the fountainhead of Vedantic Jnana and the source of the most lyrical Bhakti poetry in Sanskrit.

So complete is Manikavacakar's surrender to Lord Shiva that he was able to say, as a true Bhakta, 'I am not afraid of being reborn, nor am I afraid of death. I seek no enjoyment in paradise nor do I seek any of the good things below. May the glory of the Lord be the object of my contemplation and eternal inheritance.' Asked to explain his philosophy and approach, Manikavacakar pointed to the image of Chidambaram Nataraja and said, "The deity is the object of my song, the source of my inspiration. He is my language and my metre and He is also the meaning of my song." So saying, he merged with the Deity Jyoti in Jyoti, quite like Meerabai in Dwarka. And his body could not be traced thereafter as in the case of Meerabai in Dwarka. Gender and geography did not matter. It did not matter that Manikavacakara's ishtdevata was Lord Shiva and that of Meerabai was Lord Krishna.

Although Appar who lived from AD 600 to 680 had adopted Jainism, he followed in the footsteps of Manikavacakar, and took a proactive initiative in restoring and rehabilitating the Shivalingam idols in temples, which had fell prey to neglect, dereliction or royal wrath. He was a remarkable example of Shaiva-Jaina togetherness, which takes us back to Mount Kailash, the seeds of which are found in Mahanjodara and Harappa. Appar sings in total surrender and says in an ecstasy of devotion:

Lord Siva's praise -- my wisdom and lore

Lord Siva's praise -- the art I know

Lord Siva's praise -- my tongue proclaims

Lord Siva's praise -- the right way shows

Appar experienced the divine energy in his 'fragile frame of flesh' and found Shiva standing like the celestial tree in his heart of hearts. His firm resolve was never to lose his hold of the Lord. Another south Indian Saint, Tirujnana Sambandar to whom Adi Shankaracharya refers in his 'Saundarya Lahar' was a great saint poet of Shaivism, which was revitalized by his soulful devotional poetry and saintly life.

As in the south so also in the north, the Bhakti movement had on upsurge under the impact of Adi Shankaracharya's revolutionary revival, which embraced the whole of India from Kerala to Kashmir and from Dwarka to Jagannath Puri.

Remarkably common and comparable were the lives of the saint-poets all over India they had a sense of vairagya and at the same time were immersed in Bhakti-Rasa, which is a Sangam of Sri nagar, Shanta, Koruna and Vatsailya. They consecrated their lives to the pure truth and consciousness of Divine Bliss. Equally, their message and metaphor had the same yearning, the same striving, the same aspiration and the same heart frame of total surrender.

Andal, Meerabai and Lal Ded thus merge into one. Andal, Appar, Kabir and Lal Ded belong together. Hazrat Amir Khusrau, Baba Farid, and Rai Das (Ravi Das), Rahim, Raskhan, Tulsi-Meerabai, Appar, Andal and Bihari are not divided by caste or creed, or by north and south or by one century or other. Denominations cease to matter. They are united by their quest of the divine and the disposition of spirituality. Time and space are thus bonded in their devotional spirituality. Through them, there was true National Integration and Unity through Bhakti as the vehicle of Poetry, Music and Dance.

Kabir who had been brought up as a Muslim sought the blessings of Swami Ramanand, a Vaishnava as his Guru and felt fulfilled by the Guru's blessings. His poetry found a place of pride and permanence in Guru Granth Sahib as did Baba Farid's devotional poetry. The noble Gurus of the Sikhs tradition and saints of Bhakti poetry were preserved and enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib through which Baba Farid, Kabir Sahib and Guru Ravidass acquired millions of followers and ardent admirers in all communities and in different parts of India in succeeding centuries. Sabad Kirtan and Akhand Paath of the Sikh tradition and the popular all night kirtan have filled the lives of Indians of all castes, creeds and classes with ethical purity and spiritual solace. Kabir's Rama was not the historical and legendary son of Dashrath, the King of Ayodhya and the hero of Valmiki's and Tulsi's Ramayana, but then He is the name, the symbol and the quintessence conjured and captured by Kabir Sahib in his comprehension and exposition of the ultimate spiritual reality. In every couplet and verse of Kabir and on every page of Guru Granth Sahib, Nirguna Brahma is writ large. There is in Kabir, Nanak and in Guru Granth Sahib a powerful restatement of the esoteric wisdom of Adi Shankara's Advaita in the most accessible and comprehensible way for the common folk. That is why I like to refer to Kabir's poetry and Guru Granth Sahib as Loka-Veda.

With the assistance of Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Acharya Kshiti Mohan Sen, a colleague of Gurudev Tagore in Shanti Niketan and grandfather of Amartya Sen initiated Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore into the poetic world of Kabir. Gurudev was profoundly fascinated by Kabir. As a poet, he entered into the mystic spiritual world of Kabir and found the experience of

transcreation of Kabir's poetic work deeply uplifting and fulfilling.

Kabir, the Nirguna-Nirakar philosopher of Brahman means by Rama the one who pervades and permeates the universe and not the one in physical frame. Says Kabir:

Says Kabir, it is a question-mark.

What we mean when we utter 'Rama'?

Is it the Rama (Son of Dashrath) who is known all over

Or the Divine Lord who works miracles and charms?

* * * * *

Says Kabir, you must repeat 'Rama'.

But do it with understanding the name

One Rama is He who pervades all over,

The other is contained in his physical fame.

As my friend the author and poet, Sardar Kartar Singh Duggal puts it "What we have in Guru Granth Sahib is Kabir unalloyed.....when a Sikh bows before the Holy Granth he pays respect as much to Kabir as to Guru Nanak."

Guru Granth Sahib is an example of encyclopedic sacred literature of epic proportions. The tenth Guru of the Sikh tradition enthroned it as the veritable Guru. The Mool Mantra and Jap with which the Holy Guru Granth Sahib opens is a statement of Bhakti in Nirguna Brahma:

There is but one God.

Truth incarnate.

The Master Creator.

Unafraid.

Disdains none

Image Eternal.

Beyond incarnation.

Self-existent, True.

Realized through the grace of the Guru.

Guru Nanak, the great Faquir came to be accepted as Guru of the Hindus, and a Pir of the Muslims. He made religious and ethical issues a part of the great discourse of the Indian nation. He was the pioneering prophet of inter-faith amity and dialogue. His inter-faith tolerance and uncompromising quest of truth is beautifully expressed with piercing reason thus:

If Allah dwells in a mosque alone,

what about the rest of the space?

The Hindus believe He abides

In the image of the deity,

The truth is missed in
either case

Through his teachings of wisdom, Guru Nanak fostered a sense of Karma-Yoga and Pragmatic work ethic. He says:

He who works hard and shares
He knows the path that leads there

* * * * *

One must mediate on the Lord;
but an active life is better
than a life of sheer contemplation

In Guru Nanak's aarti, Bhakti reaches ecstatic depths of aesthetic grace and cosmic embrace, particularly, when he sings the Melody of His Name:

The sky is the platter,
The Sun and the Moon are the lights,
And stars the jewels,
Sandalwoods' fragrance is the incense,
The wind is the flywhisk,
And all the forests Your flowers.
What a wonderful arati it is!
Oh, You destroyer of life and death!

It's on unending strain the melody of Your Name.

Guru Nanak, Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh enriched the treasure chest of socially enlightened and renascent Nirguna Bhakti. Guru Ravidas, of Varanasi, born in a family of tanners and cobblers was a contemporary of Kabir Sahib who was himself raised in a family of Muslim weavers. It is a triumph of Jnana and Bhakti that both Kabir and Ravidas think, teach and preach. Their Jnana and Bhakti are beyond the barriers of caste, creed and ritual. They sing the sacred song of the fundamental and intrinsic spiritual and secular unity of humankind united by divine presence and ethical living in the deepest recesses of their consciousness. It is to them that India owes its deepest debt in the contemporary constitutional legacy of Justice, Equality, Liberty, Freedom, Secularism, Human Dignity and Fraternity.

Kabir's profound spirituality and saintliness made him free and fearless. He lived the austere life of a householder. The most powerful reformer among the saint poets, he was frontal, frank and outright in his unsparing critique and denunciation of hypocrisy, discrimination, priestocracy, and ritual worship lacking in spirituality. That poetry and saintliness could have such compelling power to transform society and to compel all sections of Indian people to introspect and reflect is a tribute to the glory of Bhakti poetry of Kabir, Ravidas

(Revidas), Dadu and a host of emancipated dalit poets who enthroned values of spirituality, ethics, justice, compassion, humanity, equality and philanthropy through their stirring and uplifting poetry of social and cultural awakening. We hear those voices continually through the corridors of centuries and in the forum of our conscience.

Kabir who had a long life span was raised in a Muslim family of weavers and yet he wore Tulsi beads round his neck, lived the Vaishnava way of life, rejected the Hindu-Muslim divide, faced imprisonment, persecution and torture for his love and understanding of Hindu thought. His legacy is the legacy of Nirguna Rama-Bhakti and emancipated humanity. He was the down-to-earth human being and high-as-sky Saint Poet of Self-Realization. Says Kabir:

As the pupil is in the eye, the Lord is in the body.

Fools do not know this and go out to search for him.

Kabir's metaphor is often earthy and mundane, but his communion with Rama is profoundly spiritual. The anticipation and joy of Kabir's Bhakti, bursts forth in a bridal song somewhat like Guru Nanak's song of the cosmic aarti. Say Kabir in his bridal song:

Sing, O bride, the benedictive bridal song !

To my house has come King Rama, my Lord.

Having fully dedicated my body, I will perform intercourse.

With my mind. The five elements are his bridal guests.

Rama Deva has come to be my guest. I am intoxicated with Youth.

I will make my body the lake and marriage altar. Brahma

Will chant the Vedaas.

With Rama Deva I will make the marriage rounds.

Wonderful, wonderful is my lot !

The three and thirty million gods have come and the eighty-six thousand sages.

Kabir says, I go now wedded with the Man, the One, The Deathless.

Rich in mystic symbolism and imaginary, Kabir's Bhakti Rasa is ageless and quenches the thirst of ages, obliterating lust, anger, greed, Karma, sin and agonies conferring on him the boon of immortality:

The unaging juice is trickling in the sky cave,

Where a jingle arises without an instrument

This is understood when one meditates.

Where lotuses have bloomed without a pond.

The swan climbs on them and has fun.

Light is seen without the moon. Here and there a swan comes into view.

The gaze is fixed on the tenth gate, on which the Invincible man meditates.
Death, the fierce, does not come near, Lust, anger and greed are burnt.

The thirst of ages and ages is quenched. Karma, confusion
Sin and agonies are disappearing.

Kabir says. "Listen, O fellow saints! Having become immortal, one never dies."

Ravidas, like Kabir was also a pupil of Swami Ramanand. He belonged to the community of cobblers and some of his verses were included in Guru Granth Sahib. He is the saint poet of humility, human dignity and equality in the spirituality of Advaita. Says Ravidas:

Tohi Mohi, Mohi tohi antar kaisa
Between Thee and Me, between me and thee
How can there be lack of likeness or difference?
Likeness or difference as between gold
And a bracelet made of it, As between water
And the waves that move on its surface!

* * * * *

Behind all the various manifestations, there is one God;

In the motion of every heart, it is God that throbs.

Ravidas, He is nearer to us than our hands and feet !

As the Lord willeth, so all things come to pass !

The Vaishnava and Shaiva waves of renaissance won the hearts and minds of embattled and oppressed Indian humanity at large and appealed deeply to their sensitive and cultivated conscience. A new sense of unity was forged in Bhakti in both Nirguna and Saguna streams, and in the North and the South and in East and the West and among thoughtful Hindus and contemplative Muslims, especially the Sufis.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau, like Rumi and Saadi, was steeped in Sufi mysticism and wrote of love and longing and of separation, yearning and communion under the inspiration of his mentor, the great Nizamuddin Aulia. Baba Farid who was a senior contemporary of Amir Khusrau (AD 1235-1325) was one of the earliest Sufi saints of Punjab. His verses were incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib in its extraordinary eclectic inclusiveness. Baba Farid's other worldliness and vairagya teaches us humanity, equality, detachment and Sufi Bhakti of True Love. Says Baba Farid:

Farid, attach not thy heart to houses,
mansions and lofty places,
When heavy earth falleth on thee
thou shalt have no friend.

Comparing princes to paupers and treating Hindus and Muslims alike, Farid says: "In the end they too find rest in the burning ground or are buried in the grave like the poor and the orphans."

Jayadev around 12th century A.D. gave to Bharat Bhakti Pravaha the most lyrical legacy of Bhakti Sringar in the tradition of Kalidas and Adi Shankaracharya and introduced as did Kalidasa in Kumarasambhava and Adi Shankaracharya in Saundarya Lahari, an exquisite portrayal of divine human erotics through the metaphor of Radha, the Jeevatma longing for union with Krishna, the Paramatmo.

Apart from Jayadev, Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were the two of the greatest saints in the Bhakti tradition. Their impact is etched indelibly on the Vaishnava tradition of Krishna-Bhakti, overflowing with love, beauty, grace and joy in Krishna consciousness.

Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, the founder of the Vaishnava Saguna Pushtimarg, came from Andhra to the north, and rose to be the most sonorous melodious voice of Bhakti after Jayadev and inspired millions of Indians to embrace the Pushtimarg of Vaishnavism, which has its many seats of establishment especially in Braja, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The temple of Srinathji in Nathadwara (Rajasthan) is testimony to the grandeur of that tradition and a reminder of the fanaticism of Aurangzeb who rose as a fateful meteor of despotic intolerance, and religious bigotry.

Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya's greatest legacy was to enliven Vaishnavism and the Bhakti movement through the charismatic and emotive image of Krishna, who survived miraculously the many devious and murderous onslaughts of the cantankerous absolutism of Kamsa who left no stone unturned in oppressing and intimidating the people of Gokul and in conspiring to eliminate Krishna's very existence. Krishna uniquely mobilized the pastoral people of the Gokul region against the excesses and intrusions of Kamsa and his evil emissaries, and also saved the people of Gokul from the wrath of Nature in the form of Indra's cyclonic cloudburst by lifting the mountain Goverdhan on his little finger and making the mountain a canopy for the people of Gokul in distress. This was people's power against the wrath of Indra, and Kamsa, the King of Mathura, a metaphor for the power of popular resistance.

Krishna in Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya's vision was not only an apostle of divine power of the people but was also the fountainhead of the sweetest of sweet graces (Madhurya). Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya's Madhurashtakam has the celestial grace of heavenly resonance soaked in the Bhakti Rasa of Giridhar Gopal and full of sonorous grace of Jayadev of Bengal of the 12th

century but without the Nayika Radha as in Jayadev who had given to Bhakti the metaphysical symbol of the Soul in a State of love and longing. Jayadev's influence on Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his movement was seminal. Bhakti Vedanta or ISKON movement, which captured the hearts of many in the east and west during the latter part of the second half of the twentieth century, draws its inspiration from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as also Jaydev. The exquisite poetic quality of Jaydev's composition in Geet Govinda and Vidyapati's padas in Maithili and Chandidas in Bangla reached the deepest levels of Bhakti. We find in them the love and longing of Radha and the affirmation of Radha's love for Krishna with all the erotic paraphernalia, metaphor and symbolism of Shringar whereas Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya's Madhurashtaka is Bhakti of the Lord in a different style and perspective. Narsi Mehta also provided a Saguna celebration of Lord's Madhurya. Mahaprabhu describes every expression of the Lord as charming and captivating. As he puts it: 'Madhuradhipate Akhilam Madhuram'. In Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya Bhakti poetry and the tradition of Haveli Sangeet of and the sovereignty of Lord's Grace and Anukampa are anointed proclaimed and enthroned.

In Kabir, we experience the limpid flow of Nirguna Rama-Bhakti. Lalleshwari or Lal Ded of Kashmir was a poetess who wrote in a Nirguna Sufi style, rejected idolatry and sought and achieved communion with Him. Rejecting the idols and temples, she said, 'the idol and the temple stone: they are but stone and nothing more. O silly Pandit, when dost thou worship Him and unite Thy mind and breath in Him alone.'

In Tulsi we enter the Vast Saguna universe of Rama-Bhakti. Meerabai, Raskhan and the saint poets of Maharashtra we find the profoundly loving worship of Krishna in which the lord is adored in his human form in an intensely human spiritual way.

Meerabai and Raskhan were by common consent the most celebrated poetess of Bhakti in their time.

A Rajput princess of Merta (Marwar) who was married into the royal family of Mewar, Meerabai travelled extensively in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Her poetry is exquisitely lyrical and autobiographical. Forsaken her royal abode, she wandered with holy men and incurred the wrath of her family. "Nothing is really mine except Gopal" said Meera. She drank with joy the cup of poison offered by Ranaji and found ecstasy of Bhakti because of her total surrender to God. A cobra was sent to her and she saw in it only Krishna. Says Meera:

None but Girdhar is my Lord
I have searched the entire universe,

forsaken my kin, my family, my friends,
 I have sat with the ascetics and
 Ignored what everybody said.

Meerabai's life was vibrant with the joy of Bhakti in all adversities and remains an unforgettable legend like that of Andal and Lalleshwari in the Bhakti movement.

Swami Haridas, the mentor and preceptor of the legendary musical genius, Tansen and the South Indian trinity of Syama Sastri, Thyagaraj and Muthuswami Dikshitar were the greatest figures in the political and musical tradition of Bhakti. Swami Haridas who lived in the 16th century was a musical genius and a hermit poet who poured his heart in the Bhakti of Radha Krishna with Radha as the central figure of Bhakti. A great exponent of dhrupad, Swami Haridas taught Tansen and Baiju. Legend has it that Emperor Akbar went in a disguise to Swami Haridas' hermitage in Vrindaban. Though Tansen was preeminent, Swamiji's music was clearly and vastly superior. Asked by the Emperor as to why it was so, Tansen explained: "How can it be otherwise? For I sing to the Emperor of this land, while Swamiji sings only for the Emperor of the entire creation."

Syama Sastri was a Devi Bhakta and composed nine Kriti's in praise of Meenakshi in the Tanjore temple. Thyagaraj was indisputably the greatest composer in the Karnataka tradition. He was a Rama Bhakta, glorified Rama as the incarnated nectar and essence of Nada and perceived Raga as Rama's bow and the Swaras as its giggling bells. Muthuswami Dikshitar was blessed with the discovery at Veena in the flow of Ganges, with Rama inscribed on it. He had a wide-ranging repertoire of Bhakti Sangeet and poetry including a memorable Kriti in praise of Saraswati.

An account of Krishna Bhakti would be incomplete without a brief recapitulation of the Bhakti poetry of Mahatma Surdas and poet. Raskhan, a Muslim Sardar, was a devotee of Krishna. Raskhan belonged to the Pushtimarg parampra of Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya whose devoted disciple was the great poet Surdas.

Surdas sang of Krishna joyfully as a child and Yashoda as a doting mother. His songs have been the life breath of Bhakti and constitute the greatest treasury of Vatsalya poetry. His song 'Mera Man Anat Kahan Sukh Pawe, Jaise Udi Jahaj Ko Panchi Fir Jahaz pai Awe' has a haunting quality, for it declares that there is no shelter or retreat for the heart of a Bhakta except in the ship of the Lord which is his only sanctuary.

Raskhan's Bhakti poetry matches with the longing in Mahatma Surdas' poetry for the Lord.

Raskhan says to the Lord, "If you are to give me an animal rebirth, let me be a cow grazing daily with the other cows of Nanda; if You are to transform me into a stone, may I become a part of the very hill (Govardhana), which You lifted by Your hand, as one would an umbrella, to teach a lesson to Indra."

In a bewitching nostalgic vein, he continues:

If I am reborn as man, O Raskhan,
Let me be born as a native of Gokul
If I am to be an animal,
Let me be fortunate enough to be a cow
In the herd of Hari
If I am a stone
Let me be a rock of the Govardhan Hill
If a bird, may my nest be in a tree
On the bank of Yamuna.

In Bhakti poetry, the remembrance and adoration of the Lord has reached unfathomable depths of tender human feeling and incredible heights of sublime thought and that is what makes Bhakti a path of total intensity and intimacy in human-divine encounters at the thresholds of the Lord as well as in climactic communion in the innermost sanctum of Bhakti.



The Arya Kanya Gurukul, Porbandar

Set amidst sylvan surroundings, the Arya Kanya Gurukul complex is a unique organization dedicated to female education in modern India. Translated from its Sanskrit origin, 'Gurukul' literally means the family of the Guru -- the Teacher. Traditionally, children were left under the care of the Guru as student inmates of his Ashram and the Guru brought them up as members of his own family and imparted to them knowledge in diverse academic, social, cultural and religious pursuits and in the martial arts.

Porbandar, the old Sudamapuri of the Krishna era and named after Lord Krishna's bosom friend Sudama, is situated where the creek carrying the waters of the rivers Bhadar, Bhilvaganga, Minsar and several other rivulets empties itself out into the Arabian Sea. Present-day history has made Porbandar famous as the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. The sprawling 90 acre site that is the Gurukul faces the temple of Porbandar's deity, 'Ma Porvai', across the creek.

Blending the tested and time, honoured traditions and rituals of the sages of ancient India with present-day concepts of modern education, the 'Gurukul' enthral the visitor with its wide spectrum of activities. Upon arrival at the Gurukul, the visitor is heartily greeted with folded hands and a Namaste (I bow to you) and this greeting is spontaneously repeated by every inmate he comes across anywhere in the complex.

Be it dawn or dusk or the inauguration of any special function, the chanting of Vedic hymns and recitation of the Vedas and Mantras in unison by the highly disciplined and trained voices of the Brahmacharinis transforms the atmosphere, charging it with a celestial spirituality and leaving an indelible imprint on the mind of the visitor. Gurukul guards the precious heritage of ancient Indian tradition, culture and education in the midst of the present

day materialistic values and a blind imitation of the West. Closely linked with its creation is the history of the glorious achievements of its founder, the late Shri Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta.

Shri Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta was born in a devout Vaishnav family of village Gorana near Porbandar on the second day of Margshirsh of Vikram Sam vat 1944 of the Hindu calendar corresponding to 17 November 1887. In 1900, at the tender age of 13, he set sail by country-craft for the distant shores of Africa. Facing a severe storm during which the small craft's main mast had to be sawed off and jettisoned, the rudderless ship finally reached the African coast six months after leaving the homeland. The young Nanjibhai displayed exemplary courage and determination throughout the long and arduous journey. Setting foot on the African soil, he initially worked under an Arab trader. After completing his apprenticeship, he started his own little trading outpost, pioneered tea, coffee, sugar and sisal plantations and grew cotton on the virgin soil of Kenya and Uganda. Soon, several cotton ginneries started dotting the countryside and the prospering pioneer established himself amongst the local populace comprising the dark Negros, the wheat complexioned Asians and the whites who fondly addressed him as Sheth Nanjibhai, the merchant prince. By the time he reached the age of 30 years, he had extensively travelled in Europe, Africa and India and this exposure as his coming into close contact with several of his own countrymen actively engaged in India's freedom struggle tended to fill the gap in his formal education. His active association with Mahatma Gandhi and the inspiration he received from Swami Dayanandji, were germane to his emergence as an educationist with a bias for ancient culture and traditions.

Sheth Nanjibhai was always accompanied by his wife on his travels and companion Smt. Santokba. Hence, education of their elder daughter Savitagauri was causing grave concern to the parents. Just then, in 1929, they met Swami Dharmanandji and Smt. Ichhaben who were visiting Africa to propagate the ancient Aryan traditions and culture amongst the Africans. From them, they learnt about the activities of the Arya Kanya Gurukul located at Itola, near Baroda. The Gurukul system of education inspired by Swami Dayanandji embodied equality of training opportunities for boys and girls irrespective of any caste distinctions or notions of unsociability. The system granted an equal right to females to learn the Vedas (hitherto a male prerogative). This system of education, imparted in the true Rishi (Vedic) tradition, cherishes the basic values and simultaneously develops the body, mind and soul. Both Shri Nanjibhai and Santokba were impressed by what they heard and they decided to send Savitagauri along with four other girls from the family to

the Gurukul at Baroda although neither of them had ever visited Baroda earlier.

Smt. Santokba and Sheth Nanjibhai visited the Institute a year later and were so impressed with its educational and administrative routine and discipline that they invited representative students to visit East Africa with a view to propagating ancient Indian culture in Africa. Accepting the invitation, a group of 22 girls led by Pandit Anandpriyaji arrived in Kenya in 1934. The group cast a spell on the African, Indian and European communities who admired their all-round development and gave expression to their feelings at a meeting presided over by Shri Nanjibhai at Jinja on Lake Victoria from which flows the river Nile. Speaking on the occasion, Sheth Nanjibhai expressed his firm belief that maternal power is the axis round which revolves the entire social structure. Society is good or bad depending upon the moral standing of the mother. Hence female education deserved even greater attention than boys' because an educated girl brings credit to two families – her parents' as also her husband's. Again, only an educated mother can mould the right development of her progeny. He further stated that Saurashtra and Kutch regions in India had all along remained backward in the matter of female education. Therefore, to remove this stigma and inspired by the all-round progress displayed by the visiting students from Baroda, he decided to establish a Gurukul at his native Porbandar and spontaneously declared in the meeting a donation of Rs. 200,000 for the purpose. To fulfil the promise so given, he went to Porbandar and met Maharana Natversinhji of Porbandar. The Maharana welcomed the idea of establishing a Gurukul at Porbandar and gave a vast piece of land at a nominal price at Rajwadi, about a mile away from Porbandar. The site was cleared, leveled and on the auspicious Dev Divali day of 1936, the foundation stone was laid, significantly at the hands of a Harijan girl. Soon, the construction work started and the Ashram, the School building, the Hostel, a fully equipped kitchen and dining hall to accommodate 160 girls, medical examination room, staff quarters and a clock tower were all erected in the short span of one year. The whole landscape stood transformed.

On 5 December 1937, the Gurukul was declared open by Maharana Natversinhji in the presence of an august gathering which included several sadhus and intellectuals. To demonstrate his own faith and confidence in the Gurukul System of Education and to instil a similar confidence amongst the people, he enrolled his younger daughter Nirmala in the Gurukul and soon seven other girls joined which considering the extremely conservative social environment of that time was a great achievement. From this small beginning, the enrolment today is between 700 to 1000 girls annually. About 20,000 girls have passed through Gurukul's portals in the past half a century and

have been spreading the message of the pure Indian culture round the world -- a culture, which they have imbibed from their systematic all-round training at Gurukul.

The girls begin learning four different languages from the very start of their curricular activities, namely, Gujarati, Hindi, Sanskrit and English. The medium of education is Gujarati but intensive coaching in Hindi prepares the girls for the Hindi examinations conducted by the Institute at Wardha and a number of them graduated in Hindi well before they finish schooling.

The Curriculum

Classes 5 to 12 of the Secondary School curriculum are conducted in the Gurukul whereas the classes for the degree course are held in the Gurukul Women's College. The College Hostel accommodates 250 girls. Another 400 girls from the city of Porbandar and surrounding villages attend the daytime courses.

For girls oriented towards the fine arts, there are courses in music and painting and the talented amongst them qualify for music and painting examinations conducted by the All Gujarat Music Committee and the State Examination Board respectively.

Government Recognition

The Gurukul and its curriculae preparing the students for the Xth and XIIth standard examinations have been granted recognition by the State level Secondary School Boards.

Salient Features of the 'Gurukul' Training

At Gurukul, the educational system is a clever blend of the rich ancient Aryan heritage and the present day educational system with its science and technology orientation.

Literally, the word 'Gurukul' means the Guru's (or the Teacher's) family. The relationship between the Guru and his pupil is similar to a mother's towards her daughter or a father's towards his son. Based on the belief that all human beings acquire the patina of culture only through subsequent training and not through birth, the girls go through the sacred thread ceremony upon their joining the Gurukul. According to the Aryan philosophy, one who always strives to progress is a 'Arya'. The basic concept in this outlook is the maxim 'Be Human'. The guidelines for developing the body, mind and soul are referred to as 'culture' and the continuous process of developing the body, improving the mind (i.e. thinking), and, uplifting the soul, is culture.

Each new entrant is ritually initiated into her new role of a student.

Based on the tenth of the sixteen basic tenets which distinguish a true 'Arya', the girl first takes a vow of celibacy whereupon the Guru drapes her with the sacred thread synthesizing the power of the Creator (Brahma), the Preserver (Vishnu) and the Destroyer (Rudra or Shiva). Thereafter the girl takes the oath ever to follow the path of truth and the Guru blesses her saying 'Beloved child, from now on, the Heavenly Fire is your Guru. Oh! Mighty Sun, the repository of Light, this is thy celibacy. Protect her always. May her interaction with me be always respectful. Again addressing the girl, the Guru then says, 'Dear Pupil, Lord Hruhaspati (Lord Jupiter) has appointed me your tutor. Engulf your heart in my mind. May there be fusion of our thoughts and may our minds work in unison.'

Every year, on the full moon day of Shravan, the most auspicious month in the Hindu calendar, through the ceremonious changing of the Sacred Thread, the Guru sermonizes the pupil on world citizenship and inducts her into her own family after which she is given the first lesson in the Vedas.

The girl makes an offering to the God of Fire and invoking His blessings to wipe out any shortcoming in her through the Divine Light, she prays to the Sun God for creative talent and for sharpening her speech, her soul and her faculties. Through this auto suggestion, she awakens her latent creativity and then learns the Gayatri Mantra from her Guru. The vertebra comes alive with vibration on recitation of every word of the Gayatri Mantra and the smallest particle in the human body goes through a cleansing and revitalizing process. The Guru recites prayers invoking the Fire God to cleanse the Guru's body and for His Light to protect the pupil's prestige and integrity. Finally, the Guru asks the new pupil (a) always to speak the truth, (b) to act righteously, (c) never to sleep during the day, (d) to eat the right food, (e) to be ever eager for knowledge, (g) to be always well behaved and courteous, and (g) to control her speech. On her part, the Guru promises and assurances, which is a unique feature at Gurukul, the girl is mentally and spiritually prepared to imbibe knowledge.

The present-day system of education stresses materialism and lacks moral, religious and spiritual orientation. The sight of past students visiting Gurukul years later and scooping up handfuls of dust from the hallowed Gurukul grounds, visibly touch the onlooking teachers.

Media for All-round Development

The girls' physical development is ensured through Yogic exercises, Yogic 'asanas' and training in the use of the lathi, spears, knives, lezim, etc.,

during drills and human pyramids. They are also taught swimming and trained in self-defence. The art of self-defence through learning Jujutsu takes pride of place in the girl's physical training.

Saraswati Sabha

The Saraswati Sabha, named after Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning is a forum conducted by the girls themselves, which inspires and enables them to give expression to their latent talents. The forum's activities include debates, writing, artistic creativity including acting and drawing designs on the floor using powdered chalk in a variety of colours. The girls also edit the forum's house magazine 'Bharati'.

Daily Committee

The Ashram's daily routine is carried out by a Daily Committee, in which the member girls themselves allocate duties depending upon their nature.

The Routine

Every morning at five, the Gurukul comes alive through the chanting of the Vedic mantras. After the morning ablutions, the girls congregate in the prayer hall adorning the grounds for the morning prayers followed by group exercises. After taking a glass of milk, they get down to individual studying from 8 a.m. to 9.45 a.m. From 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. is mealtime. The detailed menu is preplanned. Each girl by turns helps with the cooking and serving of food, cleaning of utensils and plates and generally with keeping order and maintaining cleanliness. All inmates partake of the same wholesome food.

The academic activity starts at 11.10 a.m. after a prayer and goes on until 5 p.m. Snacks are served in between at timings, which are varied to suit the seasons. Leaving the classrooms, the girls return to their rooms, which they then clean. From 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., they engage in physical exercises and games. After prayer, at 7.30 p.m., they have their evening meal and thereafter in the mass prayer they recite Vedic Mantras praying for a sharp mind. The younger girls then go to bed whilst their seniors study for a while before retiring at 10 p.m. The above routine is altered only to suit seasonal requirements. Basically, at Gurukul every moment is utilized for training unlike modern institutions where there is no interaction between the students and their educational institution. If there is no coordination between education and the daily routine life, the individual's growth lacks character. The Vedic character has righteousness as its base and is, therefore, adopted as a basic tenet at the Gurukul.

The Hostelry and Institutions at Gurukul

Huge compound walls line either side of the road from Khapat Marg to Rokadia Hanuman Temple. The main entrance on the right, which is adorned with a clock tower opens out onto a small garden through which one proceeds to the main Prayer Hall. To the left of the Prayer Hall is the Gayatri Mandap and a beautiful small temple housing the symbolic representation of the Gayatri Mantra. In the corner of that part of the wall is the foundation stone of the Gurukul laid at the hands of a Harijan girl. In the centre of the Prayer Hall are placed the scriptures of the four Vedas by the side of the Yagna Kunda, the small well for offering Yagna. To commemorate the Platinum Birth Anniversary of the founder of Gurukul, Shri Nanjibhai, the spire on the Prayer Hall was raised to a height of 75 feet. A flag with the word 'Om ' on its flutters daily from this spire symbolizing the universe and the everlasting vibrant.

Behind the Prayer Hall are the students' rooms, toilets, bathrooms and a swimming pool. On the right of the Prayer Hall is a temple dedicated to Goddess of Learning, Saraswati, with the inscription 'May our learning be holy and pure.'

In front of the temple is a stage, from which several cultural programmes have been presented to almost a thousand strong audiences. On one side of the stage is a huge photograph of Mahatma Gandhi and on the other, one of Maharshi Dayanand Swamy.

The diagnostic centre, the dining hall, the gymnasium and the residential quarters of the faculty are located to the left of the temple. The upper Mandap house are located to the left of the temple. The upper and lower floors of the Gayatri Mandap house the classrooms. A well-stocked library of about 18000 titles adorns a part of the first floor.

A portion of the Gurukul Ashram as also the hostels housing the students of the Women's College are situated on the other side of the road bisecting the campus. About 85 feet above ground level, a 12 feet high and 9 feet wide statue of Shiva in the pose of the dancing Natraj stands guard over this sector. The Women's College building adjoins the hostels. Then comes, the Rajawadi wherein the centre of attraction is the Bharat Mandir. Inside this imposing structure and facing the entrance is a 33 feet x 29 feet relief map of India showing the fascinating mountain ranges and sacred rivers flowing down the planes to the sea. Paintings depicting various mythological incidents and life size statues of the personalities involved -- Gods, Goddesses, Sages and other dignitaries, who have lived down history, adorn the walls and pillars and are a source of inspiration to all visitors. Facing the Bharat Mandir and

across the road is Western India's first Planetarium named after Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Gurukul Family and its Pillars of Strength

Amongst all the living orgasms, the coveted birth is as a human being. This eternal truism was expressed by His Holiness, the Adi Sankaracharya. Again, the real man is he who has been reared in the cultural warmth and affection of his parents and his Guru. The Gurus' Ashrams sprang up as a substitute for the home and provided the warmth of the family atmosphere besides institutional training. The Gurukul has followed the same pattern and has interwoven the Ashram life with the provision for imparting knowledge. Its Director and Assistant Directors are the mother and the Head Mistress and Teachers are the father to all the inmates.

The fountainhead of inspiration for all activities at the Gurukul and for its talented and devoted staff has been the ever ebullient Kumari Savitaben Nanjibhai Mehta, fondly and respectfully addressed to by everybody as 'Didiji'. Savitadidi is the Principal of the Arya Kanya Gurukul Mahavidyalaya as also the director of its physical training programme. She holds a Diploma in education from the University of London. She also holds the highest qualifications and honour in the Manipuri style of dancing. She has the distinction of directing and choreographing fourteen dance ballets presented to the public by the Gurukul girls. Soon after finishing her own studies, she took over as an Honorary Teacher at Gurukul and ever since, she has kept the cultural heritage she inherited from her father and founder of the Institute Shri Nanjibhai and from her revered mother Smt. Santokba.

The sight of Smt. Santokba, Gurukul's revered matriarch sitting on the steps in the twilight, regaling the girls around her with tales and experiences of days gone by is unforgettable. The girls sit enthralled listening to her. It is common knowledge that all the girls at Gurukul are treated as their own by all members of the Mehta family.

The Management

Raj Ratna Sheth Shri Nanji Kalidas Mehta Arya Kanya Vidyalaya Trust manages the affairs of the Gurukul through its Trustees who presently are:

1. Smt. Santokba Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta
2. Kum. Savitaben Nanjibhai Mehta
3. Shri Dhirendrabhai Nanjibhai Mehta
4. Smt. Saraswatiben Khimjibhai Mehta
5. Shri Anandpriyaji Pandit.

Shri Dhirendrabhai Nanjibhai Mehta is the Managing Trustee.

The major part of the expenses of the Institute is met out of the interest earned on the Rs. 5 million donated to it by Shri Nanjibhai during his lifetime. The tuition fees per student are around Rs. 3000 annually. The enrolment is without any distinction of caste or creed as evidenced by five girls of devout Muslim parents and five Negro girls who have been trained at the Gurukul. The Institute does not accept any donation or charity as a matter of principle lest the conditions usually attaching to large donations and contributions taint the Institute's policies in moulding the character of its students. Likewise, the Institute has always avoided accepting Government grants to avoid any political influence.

The founder, Shri Nanjibhai breathed his last on 25 August 1969 amidst chanting of the word 'Ram' by all around him. During his lifetime, he was the recipient of the titles of Dharma Ratna (from Shri Kaka Kalelkar on Nanjibhai's 81st birthday), Raj Ratna (from the Maharaja of Porbandars) and MBE from the British Government.

Shri Nanjibhai spent his last days living in a small hut within the precincts of the Gurukul, which after his death has been converted into a 'Smruti Mandir' to perpetuate his memory. By its side has erected a small 'Samadhi', where every year on the 25 August, all the Ashramites offer their tributes whilst ringing the bell specially brought from the Pashupatinath Temple of Nepal. On that day in the evening, an eminent personality is invited to deliver a Special Lecture as part of the Annual Lecture Series named after Shri Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta.



Sanskriti Awards Introduction

If culture is the quest of the human spirit for the best that has been known, said, and created, that is what is implicit in the aspirations and accomplishments of Sanskriti as an institution; and if culture is the celebration of life in all its creative dimensions, Sanskriti is an institutional pilgrim, sui generis, on that path and in that quest.

As one who has had the good fortune of a close association with O.P. Jain, and with Sanskriti from its very conception and inception, I have witnessed the unfolding of the destiny of an idea with which a tryst was made when Sanskriti formally launched its awards twenty-five years ago. That was the beginning of our journey as well as an important point of departure.

Sanskriti Awards constituted the point of departure from most of the existing Indian national awards, many of which were generally meant to honour talent that had already flowered and gained recognition, and to crown those whose eminence and achievements had been national acclaim. However, we felt that it was equally important, indeed imperative to search for new and emerging talent and to identify and foster it. The purpose of the Sanskriti Awards has been to discover, inspire, and honour new, emerging, and young talent; to make the recipients aware of their own capacity and strength; to emphasize that they are not alone in their struggle and striving, and to say that we entertain high hopes and expectations in relation to their creative contributions.

The Awards, as the years unfold, have become a badge of honour and recognition, and equally a forecast of many more achievements to come. Most of our awardees have gone on to become celebrities in their respective fields.

The awards have striven to foster the most essential and abiding elements of our cultural heritage and help promote creativity, excellence, sensitivity, depth, and the quintessential vision and values of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and that is what, I think Sanskriti is all about.

Once Sanskriti was established as an institution, it acquired a life and momentum of its own. The success of the Awards based on objective considerations and secured by procedural safeguards to focus on merit in the process of selection, have heartened us in our resolve to explore other relevant areas of cultural endeavour.

The Museum of Everyday Art, another Sanskriti project, was initially housed in the basement of O.P. Jain's private residence also called 'Sanskriti'. That museum has now been relocated to our beautiful green and tranquil campus in the solitude of Ayanagar village on the outskirts of the metropolis, which has gravely been denuded of the green cover that at one time earned New Delhi the sobriquet 'garden city'. We have renamed our part of the village Anandgram, and the little village, in which it is located, forms a kind of cultural and ecological sanctuary. The museum has come to be acknowledged as a very special affirmation of the aesthetic intimacy of everyday life with art and things artistic, and is truly a dream come true. The Sanskriti sanctuary is also an eloquent statement of individuals possessing a sense of culture, Sanskriti's love of trees, flowers, gardens, how a tranquil and unostentatious cultural setting can become an act of creation and communion with culture in the habitat of cultivated nature.

Sanskriti's Museum of Everyday Art houses objects and exhibits that annotate the living ethnography of Indian life and are not 'without a contemporary face', to borrow an expression from Jyotindra Jain's exposition in this volume, and are examples of what he calls 'fixed and founded forms of art'. Those are objects and exhibits belong to the evolving context of everyday life and are symbolic reminders of 'mutating identities' which have belonged to the kaleidoscope of Indian life. They are real and down to earth, telling us that culture is the living substance of everyday life, and its joys and utilitarian aesthetic comforts.

Culture is drishti, suggests B.N. Goswamy, a distinguished colleague and contributor to this commemorative volume, which relates the story of our journey across more than 25 years of culture. He explains that drishti literally means seeing, viewing, and beholding. I would add that drishti also includes experiencing srishti with the sum total of our physical senses as well as our imagination, perception, insight, and intuition in all the varied reaches and manifestations of human consciousness and creativity, which continually contextualize the text of culture. Culture unravels, enables, and empowers us to cherish, celebrate, and perpetuate our inheritance and to carry it all into new contemporary equations with life. Culture is memory, a mindset encounter in time and space, and futuristic visualization all rolled into one. It flows and pulsates in the perennial stream of life, posing challenges as well as the premises and postulates of dialogues of amity and affinity among human beings, civilizations, and within societies.

My friend and colleague of many years Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, whose association we have been privileged to enjoy in Sanskriti, points out that the dimensions of culture are identifiable but not measurable. She is of the view that culture and cultural identity may be identified as both culprit and solution but I think culture is often the victim, more sinned against than sinning in the convulsive vortex of contemporary political discourse and its adversarial and disputatious postures and platitudes. Sanskriti envisions a healing, conciliatory, and synthesizing role for culture in social dynamics. It is through cultural education, through the vibrant traditions of the arts including all the crafts of our everyday life that Sanskriti may be able to play a more active role in our society.

Sanskriti is profoundly local and authentic in its remarkable celebration of the rich diversities of India's creative terracotta traditions of art. It is at the same time unapologetically global in its much-admired international residency programme, studio apartments concept, and multicultural participation. Yudhisther Raj Isar describes meaningful cultural dialogue as an act of utopian realism. Sanskriti, at 25, is youthfully and robustly replete with a high degree of homespun utopian realism.

During the arduous institutional journey of Sanskriti as an idea and an institution, it was O.P. Jain's intimate friendship circle and his total dedication to the institution that provided us all with the camaraderie and the spirit of striving and innovation, the element of inspiration, the spark of imagination, and the satisfaction of seeing things happen. That is what delineates the twenty-five years of Sanskriti as a positive aspect in our national life.

Robert Frost once wrote, 'I have never started a poem yet whose end I knew. Writing a poem is discovery'. Sanskriti is a song and a discovery at every step. That poem is an episodic composition in the larger epic of the culture of India and of humanity. We have not however come to the end of our journey; our quest is a ceaseless and continuing one.

Those of us who have been involved with Sanskriti all these years love its uncommon song and sentiment, reminding us of the words of Goethe whose words has a living resonance for me. Said Goethe, 'Men are so inclined to content themselves with what is commonest; the spirit and the senses so easily grow dead to the impressions of the beautiful and perfect that everyone should study, by all methods, to nourish in his mind the faculty of feeling these things – one ought to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words.' I close with the hope and the prayer that Sanskriti as an idea and as an institution may continue to nourish our faculty of listening to the heartbeat of culture and experience its embrace, to enliven the spirit, and refine the senses.

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Teachings of *Gita*

Gita is not just a treatise of meta-physical philosophy. It seeks the highest truth for the highest practical utility. Its relevance is our approach to it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish its essential and living message that in it on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare.

The central theme of *Bhagwat Gita* is 'man at work'. A comprehensive spirituality embraces action and contemplation, man in society and man in solitude, man at work and man in worship. This is the unique contribution of this scripture. It is far from any dogmatism and does not belong to a particular religion or creed. Karma or Action is the whole beauty not cessation from work is the central theme of Karma Yoga in *Bhagwat Gita*.

Except death, man has conquered physical world to the extent that he can burn down the whole earth to ashes in no time with an atom of his own creation, which has again put the humanity in tenter-hooks. In spite of this maximum material progress man is unhappy, confused, and feels lost. The over intelligence of the man without the spiritual accord and a cultural beauty, devoid of a human bondage is leaving the man an insane, lonely, mental wreck. No wonder the most progressive nation has the highest suicidal rate. Sage Vyasa has created this greatest episode of history to portray the truths through faithful objectification the form of Sri Krishna in the human embodiment.

The *Gita* teaches an integral personality for drawing the maximum potential from human material and mind, body and soul for a completely fulfilled human life. Therefore, the education, which it imparts, is relevant not only for a yogi who renounces the world but equally pertinent for the man who remains true to the life in this world and thereby gets the maximum

benefit for a happy life. Krishna expounds the technique of self-development and self-perfection by disciplining the body and mind! Immoral impulses and unethical institutions bring the man to the life of a brute. To expose the mind to meditate upon the All Pervading is a way to heal these ulcers. Krishna explains the devastating ruin of the mankind is due to the attachments to the world of objects. The attachments when lead to desires and desires to more desires and when these desires are not fulfilled anger and discontent arises.

Master of wisdom is a man of perfection of self-control of mind, which emphasis about the world with no special attachments towards them. One who is free from his desires is egoless. Then the 'I-ness' and 'My-ness' naturally dissolve. Such a man becomes peaceful and realizes the Almighty.

The fundamental ethics of morality of civilized nations all over the world of any creed or race have been always the same. The goal of good man of by-gone days is also the same goal with a good man today. This one beautiful theory of thinking right, doing right and dying for righteousness is almost waning out which is the fundamental cause for all the human misery that is on the increase.

Active resistance to evil is the Krishna-creed in the *Gita*. It will be a happy revolution, when the humanity, in totality, can realize that God is not a being who is away from us. He is in us within us. The Eternal absolute is explained to us an Infinite, all knowing and all blissful. Our experience of ourselves is that we are finite, ignorant and miserable souls. Thus, between the Reality, which is our Self, and what we experience ourselves to be, there seems to be as much difference as between heat and cold, light and darkness. Why is it that we are not able to recognize the Self in us, which is our Real nature? In our ignorance, when we try to perceive the Truth, it seems to be a goal to be reached at some distant place, in a distinct period. However, in fact, if we are to believe the Lord's words, the Self being our essential nature, we are never far from it.

Man in India always lived for a higher purpose of life. In this struggle for the higher, metaphysical, philosophical and religious existence, the whole culture, the art and literature, the ethical and moral systems, the Sastras, the Itihasas, the temples, sprang up as the 'Manava-Dharma-Sastras' the ethical code of man. The most wonderful epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, which include the *Bhagwat Gita* are produced as Light for the Eternal man -- *Bhagwat Gita* is a straight teaching to live the life with the final goal of release or self-realization, i.e. Moksha in any circumstances. To be a Yogi is to develop the personality from within that is the goal of every seeker. Krishna tells to live always in the supreme with the spark in Godhood. When we live in a

body then only we come to enjoy love, truth, beauty, power, calmness, light and freedom. Then he becomes the happy man, the God-man.

Man, in his tremendous progress, has forgotten this higher beauty. Therefore, he is restless and with all the artificial aids for promising progress towards human enjoyment landing him back in further dissatisfaction because he has endless desires. Having a fan, he is missing the air-conditioner; travelling in a car, he feels he would have been better flying. This dissatisfaction, this weakness for more and more physical allurements is because we are trying to raise ourselves leaving behind the spiritual philosophical backbone the Dharma of Life. Even a little child, is arrogant and wants independence. The safest could be when we can safely place ourselves in the chariot of life with full confidence in God who will readily become our charioteer only to repose our confidence in him. Instead, if we have chosen to be the charioteer of ourselves, we have an empty chariot.

A doctor or an artist who believes the presence of God in him and works peacefully in the world outside is more successful in his profession. This equanimity of the mind alone can bring out the beam of inspiration, and give to one's achievement the glow of real success. The wise who have studied into the depth of *Bhagwat Gita* are very steady in their reactions, to the people around. The wise meaning those who know the art of living, undertake all work, maintaining themselves, the full evenness of mind, and thus abandon all anxieties for the fruits of their actions. Man has been created to be kind, divine and loving. However, since he is continuously hungering for more and more sensuous desire fulfilments, he has been constantly enslaved and he is going in for the various cruel, immoral, acquired vulgarities of life.

Life education means true and total education. Philosophy understanding of the basic truths leads to right knowledge. Philosophy is not a subject that can be rightly understood by hasty students. Therefore, it has been abandoned and neglected. Yoga of knowledge shows as to how the individual should turn his actions into right Yoga of self-perfection. The education imparted by Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is the education implied to the world of sentient beings who aspire for divine glory in the right sense with sincere effort. The philosophical foundations of life -- education implies the basic truths of integral experience, which can be only understood through philosophical knowledge and experience through yoga. Right knowledge and right action lead to right livelihood. Education for life is education for higher realization. This realization is no other than the realization of God.

Dharma is righteousness. This book finds its due place and is most demanded even in the British Library, which is considered as the world's largest library. The main reason behind all this is that it pleads for truth, justice, equality, selfless-action and life-education.

Bhagwat Gita asks the individual to develop an inner discipline and act in the world outside fearless. He should develop purity of heart, right knowledge, alms giving and control of the senses. Sacrifice, straightforwardness and reading of proper literature has been stressed. Every man has these divine qualities, dormant in him and he can bring them out lifting himself to a Godman provided he has developed the discipline and awareness to do so. Such man builds up vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, and absence of vice.

Serving others had been the nature of the Hindu philosophy. People who live in the physical pleasures are called as 'Living in Sin' and the Divine song asserts, 'They live in vain'. Man of knowledge and wisdom works in the world outside with no greed, no attachment, finding Happiness in communion with the Almighty. Such an individual works with zeal to see the higher-self in whatever he does. He leads a life of self-satisfaction and contentment. He lives like a God-man on earth.

When an individual has conquered his body, mind and intellect, it means all his egocentric misconceptions have vanished. An individual has to develop himself by gradually ending his actions at the body level so as all these innumerable thoughts and attachments do not flock or disturb the mind while it is in meditation. We have many Masters-of-perfection in all ages, who have been repeatedly clarifying to the seekers that there is no short cut to this realization of Almighty, the supreme consciousness. Once the mediator reaches this stage of Perfect Bliss, the plurality of the world is dissolved. Otherwise, millions are born and millions die with no aim only spreading more misery.

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View of Life through Holiness

Long before ecology became the refrain of the global song at Stockholm and Rio, the ancient Indic heritage had already provided a spacious spiritual home for the environmental ethos. In the West, the term 'ecology' was coined only in the latter half of the 19th century from the Greek word Oikos, meaning 'home'. However, India has provided throughout trackless centuries, an ample expanse of friendly space for an open and ongoing discourse of ideas. The Jain, Vedic and Buddhist traditions established the principles of ecological harmony centuries ago -- not because the world was perceived as heading for an imminent environmental disaster or destruction, nor because of any immediate utilitarian exigency, but through its quest for spiritual and physical symbiosis, synthesized in a system of ethical awareness and moral responsibility.

The ancient sacred literature of the Vedas enshrines a holistic and poetic cosmic vision. They represent the oldest, the most carefully nurtured, the most elaborately systematized and the most lovingly preserved oral tradition in the annals of the world. Unique in their perspective of time and space, their evocative poetry is a joyous and spontaneous affirmation of life and nature.

The Vedic Hymn to the Earth, the Prithvi Sukta in Atharva Veda, is unquestionably the oldest and the most evocative environmental invocation. In it, the Vedic seer solemnly declares the enduring filial allegiance of humankind to Mother Earth: 'Mata Bhumi Putroham Prithivyah: Earth is my mother, I am her son.' Mother Earth is celebrated for all her natural bounties and particularly for her gifts of herbs and vegetation. Her blessings are sought for prosperity in all endeavours and fulfilment of all righteous aspirations. A covenant is made that humankind shall secure the Earth against all environmental trespass and shall never let her be oppressed. A soul-stirring

prayer is sung in one of the hymns for the preservation and conservation of hills, snow-clad mountains, and all brown, black and red earth, unhurt, unsmitten, unwounded, unbroken and well defended by Indra.

The Hymn says, in prayerful thanksgiving and homage:

*Earth in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,
in which food and cornfields have come to be,
in which lives all that breathes and that moves,
May she confer on us the finest of her yield. Earth,
in which the water, common to all,
moving on all sides, flow unfailingly, day and night,
may she pour on us milk in many streams, and endow us with luster.
May those born of thee, O Earth,
be for our welfare, free from sickness and waste.
Wakeful through a long life, we shall become
bearers of tribute to thee.
Earth, my mother, set me securely with bliss
in full accord with heaven, O wise one,
uphold me in grace and splendour.*

The Vedic seers regarded the Earth as 'sacred space' for the consecrated endeavours and aspirations of humankind and for the practice of restraint and responsibility. This affirmative view of the inviolable sacred space in human consciousness is integral to the Vedas and the Upanishads. On it rests the Vedic vision of a world filled with the purity of the spiritual environment and the sanctity of environmental spirituality and morality. Such a world can only be sustained by 'Satyam Brhat Rtam Ugram' the severely exacting discipline of truth, harmony and rectitude, based on a conception of cosmic and comprehensive peace as envisioned in the famous Vedic Hymn of Peace.

We invoke and imbibe Aum, the primordial sound of cosmic Harmony and pray for Peace and Harmony in Heaven; Peace and Harmony in the Sky and on the Earth; Peace and Harmony in the Waters; Peace and Harmony in the Herbs, the Vegetation and the Forests; Peace and Harmony among the People and the Rulers of the World; Peace and Harmony in Spiritual Quest and Realization; Peace and Harmony for one and all; Peace and Harmony Everywhere and in Every Thing; Peace, True and Real Peace, Let that Peace repose in my inner space, Peace of Peace, Everlasting Peace, We pray for Peace.

The ecological philosophy of Jainism, flowing from its spiritual quest, has always been central to its ethics, aesthetics, art, literature, economics and statecraft. It is virtually synonymous with the principle of Ahimsa (Non-

violence) which runs through the Jain tradition like a golden thread. Lord Mahavira said: 'There is nothing so small and subtle as the atom, nor any element so vast as space. Similarly, there is no quality of soul more subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life.'

Compassion and reverence for life are the sheet anchor of the Jain quest for peace, harmony and rectitude, based on spiritual and physical symbiosis and a sense of responsibility and restraint. The term Ahimsa is stated in the negative (a = non, himsa = violence), but it is rooted in a host of positive aims and actions which have great relevance to contemporary environmental concerns. It is a principle of compassion and responsibility, which should be practised not only towards human beings, but also towards all animals and nature. The Jain scriptures tell us: 'The Arhats (Venerable ones) of the past, present and future discourse, counsel, proclaim, propound and prescribe thus in unison: Do not injure, abuse or press, enslave, insult, torment, torture and kill any creature or any living being.'

Compassion and non-violence are the basis of the ancient Jain scriptural aphorism *Parasparopagraho Jivanam* (all life is bound together by the mutual support of interdependence). Lord Mahavira proclaimed a profound ecological truth: 'One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence which is entwined with them.'

Humanity's Ethical Responsibility

In Jain evolutionary theory all souls are equal but are bound by varying amounts of *asravas* (karmic particles), reflected in the type of body they inhabit. The lowest form of physical bodies, like those of trees and vegetation, have only the sense of touch, yet are able to experience pleasure and pain, and have souls. Mahavira thought that only the one who understood the grave demerit and detriment caused by the destruction of plants and trees could also understand the meaning and merit of reverence for nature. (Even metals and stones might have life in them and should not be dealt with recklessly.) Above these forms of life are microorganisms and small animals with two, three or four senses. The highest grade of animals, and human beings, also possess rationality and intuition. As a highly evolved form of life, human beings have a great moral responsibility in their mutual dealings and in their relationship with the rest of the universe. It is this conception of life and its eternal coherence, in which humans have an inescapable ethical responsibility that made the Jain tradition a cradle for the creed of environmental protection and harmony.

The Jain code of conduct is profoundly ecological. Transgressions against

the vow of non-violence include all forms of cruelty to animals and human beings. Many centuries ago, Jains condemned as evil the common practice of animal sacrifices to the gods. It is generally forbidden to keep animals in captivity, to whip, mutilate or overload them or to deprive them of adequate food and drink. Domestic animals may be roped, or even whipped occasionally, but always mercifully, with due consideration and without anger. Except for allowing themselves the judicious use of one-sensed life in the form of vegetables, Jains would not consciously take any life for food or sport. They are strict vegetarians, consuming neither meat, nor fish, nor eggs.

By taking the basic vows, the Jain laity endeavour to live a life of moderation and restraint and to practice a measure of abstinence and austerity. They must not procreate indiscriminately lest they overburden the universe and its resources. Regular periods of fasting for self-purification are encouraged. In their use of the Earth's resources, Jains take their cue from 'the bee that sucks honey in the blossoms of a tree without hurting the blossom and strengthening itself'. Wants should be reduced, desires curbed and consumption levels kept within reasonable limits. Using any resource beyond one's needs or the misuse of any part of nature is considered a form of theft. Indeed, the Jain faith declares unequivocally that waste and creating pollution are acts of violence. Accumulation of possessions and enjoyment for personal ends should be minimized. Wealth creation must have a philanthropic goal. Giving charitable donations and time generously for community projects is an obligation. It is this sense of social obligation that has led the Jains to found and maintain innumerable schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, lodging houses, hostels, orphanages and relief and rehabilitation camps for the handicapped, old, sick and disadvantaged, as well as hospitals for ailing birds and animals. Wealthy individuals are advised to recognize that beyond a certain point their wealth is superfluous to their needs and that they should manage the surplus as trustees for social benefit.

In The Buddhist Declaration on Nature, The Venerable Lungrig Namgyal Rinpoche, Abbot of Gyuto Tantrik University, quotes Lord Buddha Himself: 'Because the cause was there, the consequences followed; because the cause is there, effects will follow.' He concludes that these few words show that happiness and suffering do not simply come about by chance. A human undertaking motivated by a healthy positive attitude constitutes one of the most important causes of happiness; it is, in the final analysis, rooted in genuine unselfish compassion and loving kindness, seeking to bring about light and happiness for all sentient beings.

The Interdependence of Nature

Lord Buddha's vision and speech made him unexcelled as a sage and a teacher and as the Enlightened Being who saw the interdependence of nature and taught it to the world through his religion of love, understanding and compassion and his commitment to the ideal of non-violence. Buddhism and Jainism, perhaps as much if not more than any other traditions, rejected the notion of humankind as the exclusive centre of life and existence and repudiated the selfish anthropomorphic calculus of utility to human beings for the evolution of other forms of life. As the Venerable Abbot puts it, we should be wary of justifying the right of any species to survive solely on the basis of its usefulness to human beings.

He explains his view of the Buddhist philosophical system as one which propagates the theory of rebirth and life after birth, and shows that in the continuous birth and rebirth of sentient beings (not only on this planet but in the universe as a whole) each being is related to us, just as our own parents are related to us in this life. He points out that for all their limitations, our ancestors were aware of the need for harmony between human beings and nature; they loved their environment and revered it as a source of life and well-being. He quotes His Holiness the Dalai Lama in *The Buddhist Declaration on Nature*, in words, which breathe and pulsate with the Lord Buddha's ethical and ecological vision and have compelling relevance for our own time—

'Destruction of the environment and the life depending upon it is a result of ignorance, greed and disregard for the richness of all living things. This disregard is gaining great influence. If peace does not become a reality in the world, and if the destruction of the environment continues as it does today, there is no doubt that future generations will inherit a dead world'.

'Various crises face the international community. The mass starvation of human beings and the extinction of species may not have overshadowed the great achievements in science and technology, but they have assumed equal proportions. Side by side with the exploration of outer space, there is the continuing pollution of lakes, rivers and vast parts of the oceans, out of human ignorance and misunderstanding. There is a great danger that future generations will not know the natural habitat of animals; they may not know the forests and the animals, which we of this generation know to be in danger of extinction.

'We are the generation with the awareness of a great danger. We are the ones with the responsibility and the ability to take steps of concrete action, before it is too late.'

The spiritual, ethical, individual and collective dimensions of human

life constitute a continuum, encompassing the whole of the Indic heritage and transcending all segments and fragments. The Vedic, Upanishadic, Jain and Buddhist traditions perceived this and together built an enduring spiritual, intellectual and cultural foundation for an environment-friendly value system and a balanced lifestyle.

A Living Legacy

The value system reflected in the life and message of Mahatma Gandhi and the provisions of the republican Constitution of India of 1950 derived their spiritual and moral inspiration from the composite Indic culture. It was shared by different faith traditions and communities in India through the ages and often emulated and assimilated across the boundaries of religious affiliations. It is not only reflected in the Vedic, Upanishadic, Jain and Buddhist scriptural texts and other literature, but is part of the social ethos of these traditions and of other communities, which trace their roots to them. The wide variety of sects and denominations, which rose in India during the last two millennia have consistently dug and quarried from those Indic roots. The Sikh, Vaishnava and Bishnoi traditions and numerous other Bhakti denominations in mediaeval India -- which give spiritual joy, comfort and guidance to millions of people in India and abroad -- are fine examples.

The Indic environmental ethos declares that all aspects and phenomena of nature belong together and are bound in a physical as well as metaphysical relationship, and views life as a gift of togetherness and of mutual accommodation and assistance in a universe teeming with interdependent constituents. Agenda 21 has to be implemented with this sense of spirituality, morality and universality if religion is to play a significant role in creating and sustaining a momentum for ecological conservation in the hearts and minds of men, women and children.

The Indic approach to the environment is even today a part of the living legacy of India. That legacy often seems to be embattled and imperiled all around, and yet it is endowed with an uncanny and time-tested resilience. In that resilience, there is hope and promise for India and the rest of the world.



Inspiration of Indian Festivals

In 1897, Mark Twain, the quintessential American of his age visited India and proclaimed it as "the land of dreams and romance, the country of a hundred nations and a hundred tongues, a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birth place of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great grandmother of tradition" The romance of India, its unique diversities, its antiquity and its rich traditions find an exquisite expression in its festivals, which enliven the legacies of many millennia. Among all the festivals of India, Deepavali, the Festival of Lamps, occupies the pride of place. Deepavali, which literally means a row of lamps, is an ancient festival. It is also known in different parts of India as Dipotsava, Tipavali, Deepavali Pandigai, Tirukartikai and more commonly as Diwali. It is by common consent the most splendid of Indian festivals and is generally celebrated by everyone irrespective of caste and creed. It falls on the new moon day in the lunar month of Kartika, the day of Amavasya, which is the darkest night of the month. The period in which Navratra, the festival of nine nights, and the festival of lights fall is particularly significant because it constitutes the first lunar cycle after the 'cosmic midnight', which heralds the New Year. To celebrate the New Year, a star-spangled sky is matched by a row of earthen lamps in the cultural space inhabited by the worldwide Indian to usher the world from darkness into light.

Most Hindu festivals are rooted in the lunar cycle and in the nature of Seasons. Wilson considered them manifestly astronomical, intended to commemorate the revolutions of the planets, the alterations of the seasons, and the recurrence of cyclical intervals. Sir William Jones was of the view that Indian festivals are uniquely fixed by an adjustment of lunar calculations to the motions of the sun. Nevertheless, Indian can never reckon without the celestial

constellation, the galaxy of stars and the cycle of seasons. Deepavali is no exception. It relates to "the passing away of the darkness and the rains and in the break of light, the onset of autumn, the resumption of cultivation and commerce and the activities of gain and pleasure". In the Indian almanac, it is the auspicious day for new beginnings.

Hindu festivals always enshrine a blend of legends, myths and traditions. Every Hindu festival has a cluster of events and anecdotes to annotate its origin and to impart a sacred dimension to it. Diwali has however grown beyond its sacred ritual and has become a representative secular and multi-cultural social festival, offering enjoyment and entertainment to all age groups and all segments of society.

To recall the most widely prevalent legend, Deepavali commemorates the coronation of Lord Rama twenty days after he had vanquished Ravana on the day of Vijayadashmi. There were illuminations throughout the kingdom of Ayodhya to welcome Lord Rama, his consort Sita and his devoted brother, Lakshman after they had spent 14 years in exile during which period Rama's younger brother Bharata refused the throne and carried on in the name and under the authority of his elder brother. Deepavali is the festival of that cherished and joyous memory of the triumphant return of Rama, Sita and their entourage to Ayodhya. Dusshera represents victory of virtue over evil, and Deepavali signifies the joy in the hearts of the people on the enthronement of Lord Rama who has been regarded as the ultimate and ideal personification of Virtue (Maryada Purushottam) through the ages. The memory of Rama in the popular psyche glorifies the timeless tradition and the moral values of Indian society.

Deepavali is also the celebration of Lord Vishnu's victory over Narakasura and over Bali.

Narakasura was the king of Pragjyotishpur in Kamrupa (today's Assam). He earned great notoriety for his depredations including the kidnapping of 16100 damsels including many Princess. Krishna killed Narakasura, freed the captive women and gave them protection. This was on the 14th of the dark half of the month which was earlier observed as the day of Yamatarpana but which is now remembered more as Narakachaturdasi. Symbolically, people in the Deccan would customarily crush under their feet a bitter fruit called Karita representing Narakasura of Kamrupa (Assam), illustrating how our legends and festivals have united the far-flung regions of India through trackless centuries.

The legend of Bali and the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of a dwarf (Vamanavata) find a mention in Mahabharata. Bali was a flourishing king (perhaps in the Kerala region) who conquered the earth and the heaven. Prompted by the entreaties made by gods who had lost their kingdom of heaven to Bali, Vishnu appeared in the form of Vamana (dwarf) before Bali and asked him for

the gift of earth measuring three steps only. Bali would never refuse the prayer for alms. Vamana, who was Vishnu incarnate, in his first step, covered the earth and in the second the heaven. Unable to provide space for the third step, Bali, true to his promise, bent down his head upon which Vamana put his third step and sent him to rule the Patala Lok. Vamana in turn gave Bali the boon to return to his kingdom on the earth for three days every year. Those are the three festive days of Deepavali when king Bali, the munificent donor, is the notional sovereign and when white water lilies are offered to him. The Puranas call the festival Kaumudimahotsava, in which the people find delight on the earth among themselves. There is something ethereal as well as something earthy about Deepavali. For the Jains, it is the day of the Parinirvana of Lord Mahavira when Pawapuri was lit with rows of lamps as homage to the great Tirthanka.

Deepavali is mainly the festival of Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth for ensuring good luck and prosperity and warding off bad luck and penury (alakshmi). The prospects of good luck and prosperity through the worship of Lakshmi make the festival universal in its appeal. Lakshmi, Saraswati and Kali are the three aspects of the primeval energy. Deepavali is thus the festival of wealth, wisdom and righteous valour. The night of the worship of Lakshmi is called Sukharatri (the night of happiness). The festival serves to remind us that we Indians are not all the exclusively 'other-worldly', and that we are not indifferent to material prosperity!

A lively prescription for the people to celebrate Deepavali in the verses of the ancient text of Bhavisyottara is graphically descriptive of the uninterrupted tradition of Deepavali celebration. Nothing much seems to have changed the old text tells us, "People in their houses should make merry with dance and music, should offer tambula to each other and anoint their bodies with saffron powder, dress themselves in silken robes and wear gold and jewels, young women should move about in groups wearing brilliant clothes, the houses should be full of rows of lamps, handsome maidens should cast rice grains about and perform the waving of lamps (nirajana) for victory. Towards midnight, the king should move about in the capital on foot to see the fun and charm of the festival and then return to his palace. When midnight is past and people's eyes are heavy with approaching sleep, the women in the city should create great noise by beating winnowing baskets and drums and should drive out alakshmi (ill luck) from the courtyards of their houses."

Reference

1. UNESCO, Human Rights, Comments and Interpretations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 263.



Multicultural Vision

The subject is of vital importance to the future of mankind. A multicultural vision is the legacy that we can bequeath and transmit from this Parliament to the remaining years of this century and the millennium. When the last Parliament was held the Chairman of Parliament in 1893 made a statement during the opening address of the Parliament of World's Religions on 11 September 1893. I think it is important for us to recall the voices of 1893 in 1993 so that in the remaining years of this century and in the decades, the first few decades of 21st century, we may carry forward the legacy of 1893 in the context of our time and age. I read from the opening address of 1893 in order to underline the point that we have to move from the basics of mutual respect to a sense of greater reciprocity and affirmative of each other. I quote from that address of 11 September 1893 in which it was said:

“We meet at mountain height of absolute respect for the religious convictions of each other and an earnest desire for a better knowledge of the consolations which other forms of the faith offer to their devotee. The very basis of our convocation, the idea that the representatives of each religion sincerely believe it is the truest and best of all and that they will, therefore, hear with perfect respect and without fear the convictions of other sincere souls on the great question of immortal life.”

There is one phrase in that speech with which I would join issue. The phrase is, I quote “the very basis of this convocation is the idea that the representatives of each religion sincerely believe it is the truest and the best of all.” I think there is an implicit difficulty in that conceptual approach. These difficulties unfolded themselves and it becomes increasingly evident in the last hundred years. It starts with the proposition that point of my view is the truest and best of all. You start with the corollary that other points of view

are somewhat lacking in that excellence in that degree of truth which you claim that your point of view possess Answer to this is, of course, found in ancient Rigvedic wisdom The wisdom. We said "ekam sat riprabahudha Vadanti." The truth is one but it is expounded and propounded in different ways and the truth is one and has many facets.

The Jaina tradition, which was happily represented in 1893's Parliament of World Religion by a young lawyer, Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, who bore the great surname Gandhi before Gandhi based upon as you see Mahatma of our century. That point of view has what is called the logic of seven facets of the truth. Logic of seven facets of the truth is very metaphorical way in which the different facets, the wide variety of aspects of truth and a harmonious opportunity to reconcile them or at least to coincide in all tender that what we do not know is not necessarily untruth. In all to provide for the sanctity for other points of view that corollary is very important for us. Therefore, the opening address of 1893 would have to be readdressed by the present generation. When we say that meets on the heights of mutual respect, we must not necessarily say that we cannot claim that ours is only religion of truth, and ours is truest and best of all. Because, comparative religious studies must lead to an acknowledgement and not to the cult of the exclusive conceit point of view and this is which universality of the absolute and the relativity of the many different facets of the absolute have to be reconciled for each faith tradition.

Each faith tradition has to address this in term not of abandoning what is the perceptual truth in that tradition. The root to the truth is tradition but it must also start by conceding that man of the root and many of the paths, which lead to that understanding of truth. I think this is what was very important. Not only in 1893 but in the great assembly of the religion of the world which was held in Calcutta to celebrate the centenary of the great Ram Krishna Paramhans and his one of the greatest parliaments of religion which was held after 1893. The one pioneered by Sir Francis Young Husband and other pioneered by Ram Krishna Mission in Calcutta. At that particular meeting they discussed the subject of religion and culture, which forms the basis for my presentation this morning. I shall come to it in a moment but I would like to recall to you the address on that occasion by great Indian poet Dr. Ravindra Nath Tagore who said 'he does not belong to the prison house of any particular tradition.' Now he called it a prison house not because he regarded faith tradition as a prison houses. However, he regarded every dogma a prison house. A dogma, which refuses to interact to communicate and to coincide the truth of other's points of view, and this is very beautifully put in the conclusion that Dr. Ravindra

Nath Tagore, Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore as we call him in India, said "I am only a poet, I am only a philosopher, I am not an exponent or a leader of any particular faith or tradition." But precisely, therefore, he was able to create a comingling of the faith traditions of the world and he went back to a mystic poet who revered very much Kabir and he translated for Hindus. What Kabir has said and this is Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore's translation of Kabir with which he concluded his inspiring address on that occasion.

Now I quote "the jewel is lost in the mud and all are seeking for it. Some look for it in the east and some in the west. Some in water and some among stones. But the savant Kabir has appraised it, at its true value and wrapped it with care in the corner of the mantle of his own heart. However, this is what is culture. That which is wrapped up in the mantle of your hearts. 'Sanskara' is 'Sanskriti'. It resides you of all the declarations and it resides you all the disputation and deliberations, we have that we stage at the end of it all. The net result which is left on our psyche is culture, we call it in the ancient Indian tradition 'Sanskara', 'Sanskriti' or culture is a word derived from that reside you of education, reside you of instruction, reside you of interaction, reside you of civilization because what enlightens civilization what makes civilization possible, what makes possible the movement of civilization is culture and the catalyst of culture which, I think, will pave the way for interpretation of harmony in own time and age."

I would like very much to quote another beautiful saying by one of the most enlightened Indian prince of His Highness Maharaja Shayaji Rao Gaekwad who was a man of great vision. He was truly the prototype of Plato's 'Philosopher King' and he put it in beautiful words and said, "Let us amply and in spirit of partnership combine against the common enemies of ignorance, selfishness and materialism. Religions may differ but religion is one". Now this is very important unity in diversity of religions. The unity of religion is in the spirit of religion the diversity of religion contribute a tributary to the main stream. The unity of religions contributes to the mainstream. In addition, this is important for us to remember, that in the world's faith encounter, which this parliament represents today, we must recognize that my own truth is not the only truth that is why Jainism offers a logical and philosophical prospective of what they call *Anekantavada*, that is to say many foldness of truth, the logic of the many facets of truth. If an elephant has four legs and you can see only three from a particular standpoint you will not proceed to proclaim that the elephant has only three legs. What you do not see is not untruth and what you see is not necessarily truth, the whole truth. Therefore, it is important for us to see what culture can do and what removal of ignorance and creation of understanding

can do for interfaith harmony for the co-existence of religions not merely in the terms of suffering each other but in term of celebrating each other. I think we must move from the particular proposition, which I wrote to you for 1893 to somewhat revised formulation not merely a mutual respect based on the declaration that my faith religion is the truest, the best and the only one, but on the basis that I belong to a tradition, which believes in buoyancy. The faith tradition of other faith communities Jainism preaches tolerance. Unless we would be able to establish this, it would be very difficult for us to overcome intolerance, to overcome indiscrimination and to create what I call the culture of inter-faith harmony.

Religions grow and have an impact because of their tenets, not because of their teachings, not merely because there are establishment but beyond the establishment, beyond teachings, beyond scriptures. There is a culture, and ethics of religion, which is a part of precious treasure house of the world. I think this is important for us. Therefore, to recognize the multiculture harmony through interfaith dialogue is important. Culture is important. Culture is a large concept. Culture is, as my friend Dr. Jain said the other day, with regard to Jainism as the way of life. Religion is an integral part of the culture. However, culture includes and religion influences and impacts aesthetics of our daily Life. What we eat, how we dress, how we speak, how we behave, how we conduct our business, how we deal with each other is all a part of culture. In addition, that is influenced very deeply and profoundly by faith tradition, by religion and that is where we find the unity of the civilizational impacts of religion. All religions tell you of basic ethical code and that is why we want to create today through this parliament a global ethics. It is possible for us to create a global ethics only because there are unities, which contribute to the mainstream of global ethics. I mean to say no global ethics, only the Jaina ethics, only the Hindu ethics, only the Buddhist ethics. We must look for commonality of faith tradition. Fortunately, for human kind there is enormous amount of commonality of faith tradition in cultural terms but there are also diversities. Diversities are as the ties for us. In ancient Indian philosophy, we have a concept of 'Satyam Sivam Sundaram', the truth, the good and the beautiful. There has to be combination in culture of the true, the good and the beautiful. Religions influence the understanding of what is true religion, they also influence our judgment on what is good, and religion is influenced by the concept of what is beautiful. On the other hand, religions are equally influenced by the faith traditions, are influenced by concepts of truth, which are found in the heart, the mind, and souls of the individuals. They are influenced by concept of beauty, ideas of beauty. Good and bad are relative terms. That,

which is old is not necessarily good and that which is new, is not necessarily bad. It must be understood on the basis of rationality of it, on the basis how it is conceived. I think it is important for us to celebrate these cultures of different religious traditions of the world. I am not only speaking of the tenets, the dogmas, the ways of worship. I am speaking of the culture of religions. A culture of religions is extremely important. That is what I call residue of what remain after all that we have gone through and this is where I think the tributaries will make up mainstream. The tributaries of the culture of the religion will contribute understanding not only of ours but also of others. The first precept of culture is consideration for others. In fact, civilization cannot be without a concern and consideration for others. We have the concept of culture, which determines how we dress, what we eat, how we live, how we talk, how we conduct ourselves in relation to others. Every single institution in the history of humankind is influenced by the concept of culture and some of these concepts of culture are eternal as well as everlasting, abiding, enduring and relative to time and place. In a tropical country, you would not like to dress as you would dress in an alpine climate. These are the relativity of the situation but on the other hand there is a certain fundamental fasciculus of norms and forms, which is important. This fasciculus of norms and form is something, which interact constantly with each other. It is not so if we discovered the globe and that we have invented it in 20th century. The world has been for a very long time whether the indigenous Americans living here knew about the world, or not the West knew about the East or North America. What is important is that there is a quest of reaching out the discovery of ourselves. There is an inner space and an outer space. They must correlate and that co-relation must be established by the hedge-building role of culture and education. I come across description of what education and culture can do for interfaith harmony. My wife would be pleased to hear it because it refers to an experiment conducted in her college in Calcutta. In a book by Barren Eric Pamstier, 'World's Crisis and Faiths', a very beautiful example is given. I read this to you in his words. He says, "in this connection it is of some interest to note and experiment which has taken place in non-sectarial Gokhale Memorial Girls School in Calcutta. The school included in its ranks orthodox Hindus, Muslims, and Christians Unitarian ministers. A Jain was also invited. They were invited to organize religious instructions to the pupils a line, which entirely correspond to the aims of the world's Congress of faiths. She selected choice taste and text from all religions of the world to inspire the young ones to profound love and reverence for the world's great spiritual masters and to gender a thirst for truth and a willingness and ability to recognize it whenever they find it and above all she tried to evoke

a real understanding of religious experience like the pilgrimage in Hardey's poem. They must themselves come back with magic in their eyes. This is what inter-faith education, interfaith culture.

The religion and culture comingling and communicating with each other can do, can bring magic in the eyes of the young and it is important, therefore, for us to think what we can do to assimilate the quintessence of the culture of religions in all communities. The fantasy of the culture of all religions is based on manifestations in the forms of art, sculpture tradition, folk lore philosophy. That is why I referred to you, 'Anekantavada' (non-absolutism) logic of the Jains, which recognizes that there are many facets of reality. As we know, the global reality has many different facets and those facets must be seen by us. These facets are to be celebrated by us nevertheless; we must recognize that we have diversities in the world. When I speak of the unity of those diversities, I must tell you the unity of norms and diversities of forms must be systematized in the single interacting framework of unity of norms. In addition, this is something that must be addressed by us in this parliament and hereafter. Well, some basic rules will have to be established.

When I speak of the multicultural vision and values for the 21st century, I think a particular programme would have to be drawn up, a practical programme of the basic norms but I call the ground rulers on the basis of which multicultural interaction and togetherness will be promoted. There is a great movement of population but it is not for the first time, it has happened, it is happening for the centuries past when I go to north-west. I am told how their language has its roots in India when I go to cithvenia in the Boltics. I am told Sanskrit is the root of their language. Now Sanskrit is not the only root of language. There are different root of different languages, but point to remember is that mankind has travelled without the facilities that we enjoy today and they have travelled far and wide and they have carried with them memories of their faith tradition and of their culture appreciation, what is beautiful, what is functional and how human being must behave with each other.

We must, therefore, first of all affirm the diversity without losing sight of the fundamental unity which runs like a thread in all these diversity but the affirmation of diversity is necessary to dispel doubts with regard to the creation of a single monolithic religion of mankind, that is not our dream, that is not like manifesto of the Parliament of World's Religions, that is not what is practical and proper. Therefore, we must affirm the diversities while at the sametime affirming with equal vigour, the underlying unity that run like a common thread a golden thread in all these diversities. We must then, create interfaith dialogue. The dialogue through cultural interaction the strangeness

of the other's something which must be overcome. The other is you-yourself is what must be emphasized. In fact, Lord Mahavira and Upanisadic tradition, constantly emphasizes this oneness in many.

If you harm someone else and think, he is someone else, but he is you yourself. You are insulting yourself and you are oppressing yourself. You are exploiting yourself. This is the larger unity of human kind. The perception of total empathy is what is called in upanisadic tradition.

A Tmavatsarvabhutesu; Falies

It is beautifully expressed in different faith tradition of the world. Christianity tells us do not do on to others what you would have not done to yourself. Atmanah Pratikulani paresam na samacareta.

Do not do to others what you do not appreciate being done to you. This is a kind of empathy is a kind of terms of relationship. This is a kind of treaty of mankind. All this is based on two primordial conception of human nature. In the multicultural vision of humankind in the 21st century, we should be aware of these two competing interpretations of human nature. Both of these are partially true as well as untrue. The conception of human nature is that it is savage. Hobbes, the great English philosopher said in Latin-Homo hominie Lucus that the essential nature of man is such that one man to another is like a wolf. Even the wolves do not attack each other. The brutal nature of man is one aspect of the truth.

Another aspect of human nature is its essential nobility. This goes as back to thousands of year back in India. I will refer to many of my western friends the other western philosopher who expresses that thought and expressions of noble and savage. Many use the word savage as very natural human beings not unlettered, uncivilized, barbered. That philosopher was Russo who had said, "Man has born free but everywhere he is in change." Why is he in change? He is in change everywhere because he has brought and created this change by himself around him by not overcoming the nature, which makes him brutal, which makes him unkind or violent. It is, therefore, the nobility of the nature, which achieves its highest perception in the concept of dedication to truth and non-violence, passion, love and brotherhood of man. Take this element from every religion which emphasizes one to another from Vedic and Zorastrian tradition of faith to Islamic, the Sikh and more modern traditions. For instance representation of Brahmakumaris is here. The Jaina emphasizes non-violence. It is very ancient tradition. It goes back to thousands of years, maybe ten thousand years, maybe eight thousand years. In other tradition compassion and love is emphasized. Jesus Christ taught love as the creed of

all creeds, as the religion of all the religions. Lord Buddha before him had compassion as the religion of all the religions. Zoroastrian taught ethical norms of the universe as the guiding principle of living together. Islam taught the brotherhood of man. Sikhism taught the ethics of indivisible advaita in its own time. Guru Nanak and Kabir taught the same. The western tradition embraces all these various traditions. All these religions live side by side. Some at the great distance and some very close together. India is the primordial cradle of religions. A cradle of religions where Christianity had arrived in first century A.D. Zoroastrian tradition arrived in India long ago. We have Islam and other traditions. Sikhism arose from the soil of India alone. But these traditions have comingled. In commingling, there is no insecurity of loss or the identity.

The preservation of identity is consisting with the celebration of the unity underlying all those diversities. Therefore, we must go on establishing that I call Pancasila the cultural vision of values for 21st century.

- I. The first principle is affirmation of diversities and equal affirmation of unity underlying those diversities.
- II. Second is the promotion of interfaith dialogue through cultural and educational interaction.
- III. Thirdly, we must confer the concord, and positively, evolve a consensus for a multicultural dialogue. There has to be methodology at arriving consensus. Different ways have different traditions.

The indigenous Americans decided that where there is a point of difference, they will not proceed to a decision immediately; they would immediately go to meditate. The same tradition is round in Khasis recorded by an English man who was civil servant in India in 1814. The same tradition happened to be the tradition of Jains, Buddhists, and Hindus. You may go on to the primordial dawn of civilization. Resolution of conflicts is not in anger but in spirit of amity. That is important principle of the process of consensus.

Fourth is that we must eliminate intolerance, discrimination and Xenophobia. This is as old as the hills, as fresh item in human agenda a day after tomorrow. We have witnessed in the recent past some ugly manifestations of Xenophobia. Xenophobia did not end. What happened in Germany during and before the Second world War? Xenophobia did not end in the minds of men and women throughout the world. Sometimes they reached the uneasy feelings strangeness of people who do not like to me, who do not speak the same language, who do not live same life style. However, world have to recognize that we are living in an age where different people live together. New ways of migration will take place in the world. It is inevitable we must therefore create a constitution of civilization in which the rights of migrants, the rights

of so-called other people are recognized and respected.

This can be done through many different ways. In United Nations, I took an initiative back in 1978-79 in the human right commission when we proceed, it to create a universal declaration against intolerance. Then we proceed to follow up the universal declaration against discrimination, for the intolerance and discriminations are the two greatest enemies of interfaith harmony and multicultural vision and values of human kind. However, who will do that? United Nations will be helpless or the nations of the world and governments will be helpless unless they are able to create a culture of harmony, a culture of peace, a culture of spirit of religions permeating our lives, our approaches and our outlook. It is the way to proceed to the global society. These five principles, which I have delineated, must form the basic norms of the constitution of human civilization for the 21st century. Norms based on the Mahatma Gandhi's conceptions, norms based on the Martin Luther King's struggles, norms based on the humanity striving throughout the two world wars, norms, which are based on the striving on the two parliaments of world religions the one in 1893 and one now. Moreover, many other parliaments of religions, which took place in between, as I said pioneered by Sir Francis Young Husband and pioneered by the Ramakrishna Mission, more recently in Bangalore and Madras.

Therefore, we have now here the groundwork, the constitution. We have to evolve a cultural framework, which would be concomitant with the constitutional framework. No law, no constitution, no declaration, no treaty, no government can do on all there unless it is in the hearts, in the minds, in the souls of man and women. Moreover, that is where we must create defences of peace. That is where we must create defences of the multicultural vision and values, which alone can make civilization possible. It will not only make it possible for us to survive together but also to convert the challenges of today into the opportunity for tomorrow.

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Dharma

Unfortunately, the most exploited and misinterpreted word in the history of mankind is Dharma. Many a people hold it and name it as religion. It has a long chain of exploitation and, at this juncture, it is difficult to predict as to when the human creature would stop indulging in such selfish and egocentric acts and deeds in the guise of 'Dharma' which are destroying the peace and natural harmony. It is the word Dharma that has been misinterpreted by most of the world about its actual meaning. Similarly, the word that has been excessively used as a tool for serving the selfish and narrow sectarians interests is Dharma. At the same time, it is unequivocally true with no doubt left that this word alone is held in the highest esteem and spirit by human creature.

The word Dharma is so profound that it encompasses and attracts in its fold every aspect of man's life. It is debatable whether the man possesses the capacity to explore its mysteries and profoundness. Despite being surrounded in the clouds of mysteries, this is the word commanding the highest reverence and devotion from mankind. At times, this devotion takes the form of blind faith and superstition that the man becomes ready to not only to lay his life but his entire existence to protect it. By taking recourse to 'Dharma' word on one hand humanity has achieved most creative forms and higher and greater values; on the other hand the humanity has seen unthinkable bloodshed, witnessed numerous wars. Massacres, exploitation and anguish in the name of 'Dharma' have been common in the history of mankind. In the name of 'Dharma' man, has indulged in savagery and barbarism so much that he had not done that even to save his own life. While the dogmas and superstitions of a person are said to be related with Dharma but in fact dharma as understood by Indian saints is free from dogmas and has nothing to do

with superstition. In fact, Dharma dispels superstition. However, this cannot be said about religion. Dharma and religion are different words and to the Indian mind carry different meaning.

Dharma has been considered eternal and infallible by the Indian thinker's tank. Dharma is the truth and the truth is Dharma. This has been the firm belief of our saints and intelligentsia. This also has been the faith of those seers and saints who are incarnated on this earth as Vedic Rishis. Thus, it can be concluded that whoever has practiced Dharma, tried to understand its intrinsic meaning and nature and surrendered himself completely, is still adored by the humanity. They alone could experiment, while others who indulged in superficial things turned sectarians, narrow minded. At times, these sectarians enter into hype and they became fanatics.

Dharma is an eternal and invisible object and so an experience that has to be felt, realized from within the heart and mind on our own. It is a revolution in a man when he earnestly throws back all his physical and mental energies in the search of it, i.e. when he becomes so desperate to realize it. Even the smallest particle of this material world is driven by Dharma. It is all pervading and this very fact is the driving force of entire nature. Nature's arrangements are not only based on Dharma, but are also controlled and immersed in it. If Dharma is withdrawn from these arrangements even for a second, everything will collapse and disintegrate and not only this universe but the whole cosmos would be destroyed. Dharma is the prime mover not only of this cosmos but of the entire existence, even to that which is beyond our mind. Evolution and constant progress of nature is possible only through some preordained eternal method or process. The eternity of this very process is the mover of all creation. Dharma on being misinterpreted and egocentric becomes narrow, communal and rigid. In its distorted form Dharma invites and embraces barbarism and fierce hatred culminating in wars; while in its purest form it brings and laps in noblest peace, creativity and affection as well as a sense of fraternity, love and brotherhood.

When Dharma is dominated by feelings, it becomes a carrier of life energy, i.e. Prana and vibrates every element of Prana. In this stage, the world witnesses the culmination of creativity and other higher values and general welfare. This process shrouded by mystery cannot be expressed in words but some time in deep meditation only a glimpse of it can be experienced; when the whole fabric of cosmos is woven from Dharma, how this universe can be devoid of it; Dharma is the holder of this truth. This is the process, which gives form and shape to the truth; else, it will be without any form and shape. The glory of Dharma cannot be confined to monumental works

even the grandest works will be incomplete and imperfect in front of self-experience.

Dharma is not only an inner experience but also that experience which is relentless and (eternal), that which flows constantly and consistently through the medium of Karma. Dharma is linked to Karma. It is not a philosophical hypothesis but an eternal truth, unbounded by definitions. Dharma cannot be known through dialogues and discussions. This can only be understood through Karma and self-experience.

Real power of Dharma can only be known through Karma. This alone will enable to discriminate between dharma and dogmas. Dharma, which cannot be molded or transformed into Karma, becomes dogma. In reference to Dharma, Karma can be of several forms. One is when we perform actions in anticipation of something with a desire of reward. Another form is not influenced by any desire of reward. In its later form, Karma becomes the nature of doer (Karta) and his identity as well obliteration of the sense of doer ship. The transformation of Karma into the intrinsic nature nurtures Dharma and becomes prominent. Dharma and Karma both are devoid of forms without doer (Karta) and cannot be experienced. But the Karma which gives identity to the doer can be called his nature. This very nature of the doer is his original Dharma. As heat is the Dharma, as well as the nature is the fire, which cannot be changed. Similarly, inherent nature of any object cannot be changed just by will. With this change or transformation, very existence of the object will end. So longer the sun is illuminating the world and the water is moistening, they are performing their Rta Dharma (duties). Thus it can be concluded that all the elements and objects of this universe have their own natures and this very nature is their Dharma. We can say that Dharma is that which can be tested on the criterion of original nature else it cannot be true Dharma. Hence, Dharma has to enter in the laboratory of world in the form of nature and Karma, i.e. only then it can be realized or experienced. Blind faith or ignorance cannot be called Dharma. Superstitions and dogmas can also not be called Dharma. True Dharma is quite contrary to these superstitions and blind faith.

Here, one thing should be understood clearly that one would move towards Dharma when he is inquisitive and devoted to know the truth. When a man encounters with an object he generates some curiosity regarding it, which ultimately leads him on the path of Dharma (action, thinking, contemplation and analysis). Inquisitiveness does not contradict Dharma rather it leads to Dharma. Here Dharma is not as if we take out something lying in an almirah. It appears only in the form of nature of an object and Karma or

action. The existence of each object is based on its Dharma or inherent nature.

Those who want to know Dharma, its mysteries, they have to experience it, realize it. Those who do not want to go into the depths and are scared of darkness as well as unknown can never understand it. Dharma gives us courage. It gives us so much courage that the true religious persons are ready to sacrifice themselves for their beliefs. Hence, for a truly religious man there is no existence of ego. In order to know its secret they go into such depths that they identify their existence with the enormity or universality of Dharma, i.e. there is no ego or self, just as a drop of water strives to know the ocean and becomes ocean itself. The drop, which loses its identity becomes as ocean similarly, a religious person strives for union with 'Totally' by losing his ego attain realization. This experience of being in unison with that enormous or Supreme Being is beyond words.

A question can be raised here; can we experience Dharma through Karma? Can we know the secret of Dharma through any action whatsoever? It can be and it cannot be. In the former, Dharma is experienced or realised when supreme consciousness manifests itself in infinite forms. Actually, this supreme consciousness is 'Supreme' identity and is non-duality as well. Then why does it appear to be dual and why does it take infinite forms. A human being cannot answer to this question. Even the God realized souls have refrained from it and they should. Even this Supreme consciousness has its inherent nature, which is its Dharma. When we define Dharma on the plane of eternal existence or that Dharma has no relation with Karma. It can be known only through its nature. This Param Brahma manifesto itself through its existence because of its inherent nature. This manifestation is beyond time and space and so enormous that it cannot be known in its entirety. However, when we go into the depths of it we get a slight glimpse, which is incomplete and hazy. This state of affairs is because a wave cannot know the ocean in its entirety. This is the limit of human thinking and contemplation. As long as wave understands that it is a wave, it is bound with its Dharma, which is rising and falling repeatedly, at times disappearing, calms down and again becomes aggressive etc.

The state of a man in this vast ocean of consciousness is similar to a wave. Man is a game of consciousness and is a part of it. This game can be called the Rta Dharma of consciousness.

Dharma becomes even more mysterious when an individual starts considering himself the doer and voluptuary; that is when a wave, because of its ignorance consider its existence separate from the ocean. In the ocean, there is no wave, nor any such entity of wave, which is separate from the

ocean. In fact, there is only one infinite reality, which is beyond words and experience. What is there in this infinite, nobody knows. Hence, nobody knows the Dharma of this infinite reality.

West has termed morality as Dharma and has imposed several preaching and guidelines on common man. India did not relate morals with Dharma. Indian thinkers hold that Dharma and morality are different. Those who consider morality as Dharma hold that whatever is immoral, untruth, detrimental to the society should be done away with and only the truth should prevail. Indian seers hold that one should stay in the constant spiritual consciousness and try to realize the eternal self-consciousness. According to them, Dharma is the name of constant consciousness of all pervasive Self. It is that state of consciousness where untruth is impossible.

In this state of steadfast wisdom, there is no darkness, or impurity. Hence, a religious man has only to awaken from self-ignorance and to become conscious towards self-enlightenment. That is his own true nature, which is the outcome of Dharma. Once enlightenment is attained, all the darkness, ignorance, impurities and idealism disappear themselves and a man becomes perfect. This perfection is 'Anand' (bliss); but this bliss is not an experimental happiness. This 'Anand' (bliss) is the true nature of Dharma. One who knows Dharma enters into 'Atma-Anand'.

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Kashmiri Pandits

Kashmiri Pandits are the natives of the valley ever since recorded history. Down the centuries foreign invasions and despotic rules of outsiders led to their mass killings, migrations and conversions reducing them to a minority in their own homeland.

After the end of autocrat rule in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and its accession to India in 1947, the Kashmiri Pandits spearheaded the Naya Kashmir movement of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah with Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity and a secular democratic constitution as the hallmarks of a new era with the hope that they would be assimilated in the mainstream of the New Kashmir. However, their position was reduced to a second class citizen's status due to a systematic discrimination and marginalization from the economic and political mainstream of the state which led to a slow exodus of this community from their homeland. In spite of this, they never sought any special status in the dispensation of J&K.

As if this was not enough the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology to turn Kashmir into a purely Islamic state and armed terrorism as its instrument to drive the minorities away, found Pandits as its frontline victims leading to their genocide, ethnic cleansing and exodus.

Exile into neighbouring Jammu and elsewhere left the Kashmiri Pandits totally disowned and deprive – at the mercy of the elemental forces, fighting a struggle for survival. Sixteen years is a long period in which a generation of exiles passed away – many dying prematurely and of unnatural causes in the harsh and hostile environment – and a new generation being born in the most pathetic environment of camps and non-camp habitations where the living conditions has been described as sub human. The Pandits have been living a nomadic existence in search of security and shelter, food and vocation

resulting in a vide diaspora. At this point of time, their numbers in the valley are around 8000 only and their numbers in the Jammu province have reduced from three and a half lac refugees to less than one and a half in the last 16 years and are shrinking further.

The result has been devastating.

1. Family breakdown.
2. Loss of religious and socio-cultural moorings.
3. Loss of identity.
4. Loss of roots and loss of property and ambience.
5. Loss of economic infrastructures – business, agriculture, horticulture, State Govt. jobs, etc.
6. Loss of educational activities
7. Disenfranchisement leading to non-representation in the political apparatus of the state – in the panchayats, the state legislature, and the parliament
8. Urbanization of a whole community.

Refugees in their own Land: Cry Beloved Country for your Children

Kashmiri Pandits are the children of Mother India who have been oppressed and exiled within their own country and community. Have we no conscience as a nation? Must the Kashmiri Pandits commit serial suicides and immolate themselves to draw the attention of the Government in the State and the Centre. When Kashmiri Pandits were forcibly evicted from their home of many centuries in Kashmir Valley, I was reminded of a brutal Butshikan barbarian, who once did what the fanatics, terrorists and their local cohorts have done for nearly 17 years in our time and age. Hundreds of thousands of Kashmiri Pandits were made to abandon their ancestral homes and the Government in the State and at the Centre remained passive and helpless spectators. India may have won in Kargil but it lost in the Valley of Kashmir. With the forced exodus, Kashmiriyat, Hindustaniyat and Insaniyat lost their credentials in the valley. The pity of it all is that the somnolent apparatus of power has taken it all lying down and letting our pride in our citizenship take a beating.

Back in the valley their institutions, dwellings, religious and cultural monuments, lands, and orchards are in a state of utter ruin as a result of arson, loot, defilement encroachment, annexation, usurpation – in contravention of the 'Preservation and Protection of Migrant Property Act' by virtue of which their properties were the sacred trust of the State and had to be looked after by the custodians as defined by the Act.

Because of impoverishment over the last 16 years and the loss of hope to return to their homes and the exigencies of exile – like meeting the heavy costs of treatment, marrying off a daughter, paying off the debts, most of the Pandits were forced to sell their properties back home for throwaway prices. This distress sale was helped in all way by the influential buyers league with politicians and with the judicial authorities who devised crafty ways of bypassing the 'Prevention of Distress Sale of Migrant Properties Act' through illegal sale deeds.

The state administration helped the alienation of Pandits further by closing the doors for jobs, denying opportunities for trade and commerce, discouraging admissions in educational institutions, etc. The exiled Pandits are thus, left like orphans, with neither the State Government nor the Centre owning them.

If Kashmir is the testing ground for Indian secularism and democracy, the return, restitution and retention of Pandits in a compact and secure rehabilitation in the valley will be the litmus test of the will and sincerity of the Indian Government and the J&K State and its Muslim majority populace.

One small way of addressing their multifarious problems could be to declare the Pandits as a minority in J&K and accord them the minority rights as obtain with the national minorities in India. However, merely according a minority status does not solve any problem; minority rights for absentee State Subject are without any meaning. Therefore, minority status to Pandits has to be detailed with their full-fledged rehabilitation with political, economic, religious and socio-cultural, constitutional and institutional guarantees in a homeland in the valley. Moreover, conditions have to be created to induce the Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora to return by throwing open the opportunities in the state apparatus -- jobs, education, trade, commerce, and by accommodating them in the political structures of the state.

While returning to the Valley may have to wait until the battle with terrorism is decidedly won and the milieu of multireligious diversity is restored in the valley, the urgent measures to improve the status of the exiled population cannot be postponed indefinitely. Accord of minority status can help galvanize the state administration to certain definite and corrective measures to restore the shattered confidence of the hapless people. This status can give them some relief, some breathing space, and some hope. Under its ambit could be considered:

1. Preservation and Protection of Migrant Property

Ensure in letter and spirit the 'Preservation and Protection of Migrant

Property Act March 1997' along with 'Prevention of Distress Sale of Migrant Property Act'. No action has been initiated by the government so far, with the result the Pandit properties continue to be in illegal occupation. Even some government offices occupying migrant properties do not pay rent under rules. On contrary, even the Govt. has grabbed the left over property and land under the pretext of building public institutions without notice or permission from the landlords. Kashmiri Pandits have been forced into distress sale of the property at throwaway prices in order to meet the daily expenditure on food, medicines, marriages, etc.

Fraudulent documentation leading to illegal occupation of Pandit properties is a sinister trend. Such trend is the result of a growing nexus between the trespassers, the politicians, the revenue officials and the judicial functionaries. Cases filed by the owners in the courts of law are hanging fire because of protracted judicial process and failure of Pandits to produce documents and to present themselves in Kashmir.

It is suggested that:

- (a) A tribunal based in Jammu, headed by an acting or a retired Judge of High Court be constituted to dispose the cases of illegal occupation within a specific timeframe of 3 months at the maximum.
- (b) All sale and purchase transactions of 'migrant' properties following the passage of the bill against distress sale be declared null and void.
- (c) Eviction of all encroachments and illegal occupations and handing over the properties to the custodian for safe keep, and collect rent in retrospect, with intimation to the owners about action taken.

2. Economic Package

- (i) In 1992-93, the Relief Commissioner demanded property statement from all migrants including immoveable assets left behind. The details were supplied on a printed pro-forma by nearly 100 per cent Pandits.
- (ii) In December-January 1996-97, Tehsildars and Patwaris of each district of the Valley came to Jammu to collect data on agricultural and horticultural lands of Pandits which was provided. These two exercises could form the basis for assessing the actual loss of revenue and the loss of assets in order to fix compensation for the loss and for future projection.

- (iii) For the traders there is a threefold misfortune, loss of goods, loss of credit in the market including the banks and loss of regular income from trade over the last 16 years.
- (iv) Damage to houses and other structures as a result of loot and vandalizing:

Damaged houses	Burnt houses	Minor damages
As per Govt. admission 18400	4862	11000
As per our estimate	37000	11000 All Houses

The Government admits that all the houses of migrants have been looted and vandalized. The 'M.L. Kaul Sub-committee' set up by the Govt. to go into the details of Pandit return and rehabilitation, estimated the loss to Kashmiri Pandit property to the tune of 2700 crores. The corrective and compensatory measures suggested in the report have not been initiated even after nearly 10 years of its submission to the State Govt.

It is suggested that:

- (a) The balance 50 per cent of the ex-gratia relief that has been withheld all these years for no tangible reason be paid to all the sufferers along with the interest.
- (b) Compensation for loss of revenue to orchardists and agriculturist be provided for the last 16 years of banishment at prevailing market rates from time to time, as in the case of border migrants.

3. Service Sector and Employment Package

If Kashmiri Pandits are to be part of the socio-cultural mosaic of J&K, they have to be returned and rehabilitated in Kashmir valley at all costs. One inducement for this will be providing them with employment in the State and other sectors as source of sustenance. Nearly 1,50,000 new jobs have been filled by the government during the last 10 years. The share of the Pandit refugees has been negligible while most of them have retired from the State service over the last 16 years during which hardly any fresh Pandit recruitment was allowed against those posts.

- (i) Promotions of migrant employees have been frozen; pension cases are hanging fire for documentation failure.
- (ii) Migrant daily wagers have neither been regularized nor given any benefit to ease their plight.
- (iii) The posts left vacant by forced exodus, which were already filled by the valley Muslims have now been regularized last

month (6/2006). This leaves no hope to reclaim those jobs thus giving a terrible setback to their return aspirations to the valley.

It is suggested that:

- (a) New posts be created in lieu of the migrant posts filled.
- (b) Fresh recruitment from among the Pandit candidates be made against the vacancies created owing to retirement of Pandit employees.
- (c) All recruitments should be de-linked from return proposition.
- (d) Promotions of Pandit employees be de-frozen.
- (e) IIRA and CCA shall be released in favour of all the migrant employees with retrospective effect.
- (f) Adequate representation be given to Pandit employees in all departments and at all levels of governance.
- (g) Comprehensive recruitment package in police and security forces be initiated.
- (h) Fresh recruits made from among the Pandit migrants are allowed to join either in Jammu or in Ladakh till the return of normalcy to the valley.
- (i) Problems of migrant daily wagers be mitigated.
- (j) From each internally displaced family, at least one person be provided employment in the state/central service.
- (k) Age and qualification relaxation for fresh recruitments.
- (l) Pandits be provided facilities and avenues to participate in all economic activities of the State. They should be provided soft loans, new licenses to traders to start their trade outside the valley if they so desire till conditions become conducive to their return.
- (m) Loans taken by Pandit agriculturists, business men and employees before migration be waived as has been done for the valley dwellers.

4. Educational Apartheid

Apartheid is practiced by the State Government at all levels of education like schools, colleges and the university. It is more prominent in professional institutions.

It is suggested that:

- (a) Admission to Pandit migrant students should be thrown open in educational institutions in Jammu at all levels including professional institutions and colleagues.

- (b) Special quota may be provided in professional institutions to encourage them to stay in the State of Jammu and Kashmir so that they do not have to stand at the mercy of other States leading to their scatter.

5. New Relief Package for Refugees in Exile

- (i) Enhancement of cash relief to Rs 8000/- per month commensurate with the price index, the inflation rate and the increase in emoluments over the last 16 years to employees of the State Government.
- (ii) Improvement of living conditions in camps in respect of drainage, sewerage, water supply, electric supply, medicare, schools and transport facilities etc.
- (iii) Two room tenements for each exiled family with bathroom and kitchen attachments so that sub-human life conditions are removed.
- (iv) Financial succor to destitute, solitary and aged persons and patients in need of extraordinary medical treatment. The Central Government grant of five crores for emergency treatment of serious medical conditions is lying unutilized and should be utilized forthwith.

6. Relief Package for Kashmiri Pandits Residing in Valley

- (i) The condition of the residual pandits still holding on in the valley is even more pathetic than the migrants. They are hostage to the false proclamations of religious harmony and tolerance in the state even as they are treated as second-class citizens to the extent that they are seeking a migrant status.
- (ii) Proper security be provided to the Pandits residing in valley. They are living in a wide spread in ones and twos under perpetual insecurity and at the mercy of the militants. They need a compact rehabilitation, which could serve the nucleus for the future rehabilitation of the whole, exiled community in a huge township with the entire infrastructure for economic and political viability.
- (iii) Special employment package be given to the Kashmiri Pandit youth residing in valley with relaxation in age and qualification.
- (iv) The Government of India is paying special allowances to KP employees of some departments only working in the valley for the last 17 years, leaving behind their families in Jammu

and elsewhere. It may be paid to all the KP employees working in State/Central Govt./ Public sector establishments in the valley under same circumstances.

- (v) Soft loans are provided to them for establishing their own businesses on the same pattern as has been provided to the Muslim counterparts of Kashmir engaged in the Tourist trade.

7. Religious and Cultural Heritage

- (a) Preservation and protection of religious monuments, temples, shrines and holy springs and other manifestations of cultural and religious heritage like caves, paintings, manuscripts and artefacts.
- (b) A management committee or a shrine board be constituted to take care of Pandit shrines and temples on the pattern of Gurdwara Prabandhak Board for the Sikh religious places.
- (c) Religious Yatras to important religious places in far flung areas in the valley be allowed with all the arrangements and security.
- (d) The Yatra to Sharada temple in PoK be made easy on the same lines as the Muslim community without the need of visa and passports.

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Parsi Tradition

The Parsi tradition has uniquely enriched and literally 'sweetened' our national life redeeming the metaphorical promise the Parsis made when they arrived on the shores of India.

Originally, a local Hindu Kingdom in Gujarat had the honour and the privilege of giving asylum and extending hospitality to the persecuted followers of the great prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster). That was more than a millennium ago, perhaps around 936 CE. The Indian rainbow became more resplendent when the Zarathustrians came from Persia to the bosom of the kindred civilization in India. Ironically, those victims were persecuted in and came from the land of Cyrus, the Great, who symbolized the best of the traditions of tolerance. They were threatened by fanaticism and invasion in their own land. If I may say so, they were God's gift to India, a gift India has cherished. The descendants of those persecuted refugees (May their tribe increase!) have flourished in India and have grown from strength to strength, except regrettably in terms of numbers. The ancient traditions of Iranian Aryans and Indo-Aryans thus came together in the tenth century AD, in Gujarat. That transplanted community is the pride of the country to which they came with the precious treasure of Zarathustra's teachings. Significantly, they have contributed enormously, indeed immeasurably, in almost every walk of India's national life, as merchants, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, political leaders, parliamentarians, lawyers, judges, doctors, soldiers, engineers, scientists, management experts, administrators, artists, art historians, art collectors, art critics, actors, poets and professors. The many-splendoured and wide-ranging contributions of Zarathustrians to Indian life is so outstanding and colourful that our Festival of Parsis which I organized when I was President of India International Centre, a decade ago with the active co-operation of the Anjuman

and its President, Lt. General Sethna fully occupied all of eight days, without a dull moment. During that celebration, we presented for the benefit of the wider Indian community and, indeed the Parsis themselves, the many remarkable facets of the Parsi community and its many distinguished achievers, for after all it is a community of born achievers. I have a feeling that a repeat performance of that festival would be a very good idea.

The prophet Zarathustra who described himself as an Ereshi and Manthran, a seer and a preacher of the Mantra, the Sacred Word of Power, blessed and endowed his followers with dedication to Ahura Mazda, embodiment of Life and Wisdom, and gave them as his priceless legacy a luminous philosophy of life based on divine revelation. That legacy has sustained the community both in Iran and in India, and indeed wherever the Zarathustrians have gone. It is the badge of their being, the essence of their identity. That legacy has shaped the psyche and ethos of Parsis and Zarathustrians in India and elsewhere across all geographical boundaries. I admire and extol that legacy which is in fact a universal legacy but which was vouchsafed to Zarathustrians as a historically chosen people at a historic moment in world history. It was a gift of Zarathustra Spitama not only to his cousin Maidhyomaongha or to the good Kavi Vishtaspa, the ruler of Bactria (now Afghanistan) and to his courtiers but to the Aryans of yore who were willing to imbibe his teachings. As an Indian with an Indo-Aryan past, and as a descendant of what the Avesta tradition describes as Airyamna, the Arya clan, I claim, I have the right and the obligation to celebrate Zarathustra's diamond bright legacy.

The Zarathustrian legacy is the legacy of Good Mind or Vohu Mana, the legacy of Asha comparable to Vedic Rta and Dharma, Cosmic Order, Truth and Justice; Armaiti, Haurvatat or Vedic Sarvatat (Pumata) Perfection, Khashthra, Vedic Kshtra, that is courage and power and Ameretat or Vedic Amrutatava that is Immortality. Both Zarathustrians and the Vedic people are children of immortality. Both in the Gathas and in the Vedas, the Sun is the symbol of Truth and Wisdom. Fire is the emblem of the Divine, of the Pure and Righteous and is the sacred witness at all ceremonies, Zarathustrian and Vedic. The Vedic and the Zarathustrian view of life ingrain and inculcate in us the sense of the sacred, which uplifts the secular from the merely mundane and imparts to our life on earth a spiritual and ethical dimension.

I should share with you the happy tidings of recent publication of Mrs. Piloo Nanayutty Jangalwala's book called the Gathas of Zarathustra Hymns in Praise of Life and Wisdom with a translation and commentary by her. I was honoured by her invitation to write the Foreword to the book. She has

given an engaging account of the Zarthusrian tradition and an excellent translation of the Gathas. She has described the conceptual framework of the soulful and prayerful poetry, philosophy, ethics and the way of life bequeathed by the great prophet Zarthustra. It is a book of glorious yesterdays, of vibrant continuity and of a promising future. The book brings to us for the new millennium the message of Zarthustra across the centuries and across all human frontiers.

I would like in particular to refer to the Gatha Ahunavaiti the Gatha of Free Choice in which we find the lament of Gaush Urva and Zarthustra at Prayer. The legend of Gaush Urva relates to a uniquely created bull colloquially known as Gavyo-Dad from the earth on the banks of River Oxus. Ahura Mazda, the embodiment of Life and Wisdom, also manifested himself through Gayomard or Mortal human from the earth. But Angra Mainyu, the hostile spirit, then burst forth from the bowels of the earth and unleashed an avalanche of evils on Gayomard and Gavyo-Dad that is human beings and beasts. It also cast blight on the plants and the vegetation. The bull or the cow grew emaciated and died and it was from his or her dead body that there rose a living soul, Gaush Urva. The dialouge of Earth and Civilization in peril or the ecologically embattled and morally challenged Gaush Urva and the grace of eternal Ahura Mazda, which gave the world the prophet Zarathustra to establish and maintain the spirit of abounding peace on earth, has a compelling relevance in our age and time. There is a lesson in the lament of Gaush Arva and the Gatha of Free Choice, a lesson of light for all of us.

Central to Zarathustrian ethos and its genesis are beliefs such as rewards and punishments, Heaven and Hell, the Resurrection of the Dead and the future coming of the Saoshyant, a world saviour. Across the trackless centuries, the Zarathustrian ethos vivifies the three steps representing the motto of the noble tradition of Zarthustra, Humta, Good Thoughts, Hukhta, Good Words, and Huvarashta, Good Deeds, which we find and on the tripods of Marghans or fire censers. As we reflect on Zarthustra's legacy and tradition, we can see the bell above the leaping flames of sacred fire and hear its ceremonial sound because there is a resonance in the living tradition, which makes the sacred remembrance a living present and ever relevant promise.

The inspiration of Zarathustra, abides and is enduring. The sense of the sacred, which is the hyphen that joins and the buckle that binds the Parsis has been their anchor and mainstay. It has been the elan vital of the radiant and magnificent contribution, which the followers of Zarthustra have made and the many splendoured successes they have achieved in India. Those successes have the hallmark of integrity, of ethics and of a sense of public duty.

The Diamond Jubilee of the Parsi Anjuman in Delhi is only one of the benchmarks in the Parsi Millennium in India. We recall the glorious contributions of that Grand old Man of India, Dadabhoy Naoroji, the freedom fighter, Madam Cama, the wise and moderate leader, Sir Phirozeshah Mehta, and many others in our freedom movement. Remember that the first great entrepreneur of India was a Parsi; the first three Indian members of the House of Commons were Parsis, the first great nuclear scientist of India was a Parsi; the first Advocate General of India before independence was a Parsi. Parsis have their own Gujarati language and literature; they have their own traditional attire. Parsi theatre was a pioneering phase in Indian theatre. Some of them have also distinguished themselves on the silver screen and in classical and popular Indian Music. One of the greatest contemporary master conductors in the world is a Parsi. Parsi poets and writers have carved a niche for themselves as litterateurs. The list is long and extraordinarily distinguished both in eminence and versatility, but I cannot close without referring to Mr. Justice Bhargava, Shri Soli Sorabjee, Shri Fali Nariman and Shri Andhyarujna of my own legal fraternity, and of course the living legend of India, my good and esteemed friend Nani Palkhivala who will complete his 80 years next week. A charismatic communicator, a great public educator and an orator par excellence, he has done the country and the profession to which he belongs proud. Nani Palkhivala's impassioned and persuasive eloquence was of such a quality that, in the words of Shakespeare, "the air is still, and the mute wonder lurketh in men's ear, to steal his sweet and honeyed sentences." Of Nani Palkhivala, we could say with Shakespeare, "Turn him to any cause of policy, the Gordian knot of it (he) will unloose." Nani is of course a class by himself, but it is also true that in nearly every walk of life in India, we do have a significant Parsi presence.

The psyche and ethos of Parsis were undoubtedly shaped by the precepts of Zarathustra, in triumphant glory, in trials and tribulations of adversity, and in their transplanted and happy resurgence in India. The community and those who belong to it have striven, as far as it is given to mere mortals, to live up to the precepts of Zarathustra. In more than 1000 years of their estimable presence on the Indian subcontinent, they have made a contribution quite out of proportion to their numbers. They prove the proposition that what counts is not the numbers but the quality of the contribution that those numbers, big or small brings to bear upon and pour into the mainstream of the life of the country. And I am glad to say that Parsis count and account for a lot in the life of the Indian nation. I salute the Parsis of India.



Dr. P.C. Alexander's Autobiographical Account

Dr. P.C. Alexander's autobiographical account of his tenure and in close proximity with Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi has been described by my friend Fali Nariman in his own vintage coinage as 'A Thriller'. Moreover, a political thriller it is. It keeps its readers on edge and move with a pace all its own. There is never a dull moment. The story comes not from the horse's mouth but from one, who tended the horses, saw them, saddled them, heard them and saw them racing. For historians and serious scholars of the Indira Gandhi period in India's political history, the book is an indispensable quarry of information, observations and insights about the Queen and the courtiers, as well as would-be-kings and contenders and challengers.

Dr. Alexander gives us not only an authentic narrative of Indira Gandhi during the years he served with her but also an engaging account of events and episodes as well as players and the game. Remarkable images of Indira Gandhi as an astute administrator, political, a great patriot and a highly civilized human being comes through the narrative. Equally, we see in the narrative an honest, wise, able, efficient and patriotic Indian civil servant in the vortex of political issues and controversies participating in decision-making and policy-making. In addition, we also see the outline of prime ministerial form of government and the contours of the new office of Prime Minister's Principal Secretary, its centrality and primacy in the system of India's parliamentary and federal governance.

Dr. Alexander's autobiography is rare and partakes of authentic history. Not for anything did Carlyle say that a well-written life is almost as rare as a well spent one. Dr. Alexander would be entitled to claim credit for both. Mahatma Gandhi's Experiments with Truth is a monumental autobiography,

the like of which the literary annals of the world have rarely witnessed. Pandit Jawaharlal's books are autobiographical in style and narrative but they are not autobiographies, strictly so-called. One of the greatest literary autobiographies was authored by the poet Shri Harivansh Rai Bachchan. It has the confessional candour of Jean Jacques Rousseau but is more subtle though less eventful. The Miscellany of Justice M. Hidayatullah has an autobiographical flavour but is not quite an autobiography. Boswell wrote a biography of Dr. Johnson with an autobiographical flavour. In a sense, Dr. Alexander's journey through corridors of power is not only his autobiography but also a substitute for Indiraji's own autobiography. Two notable contemporary Indian giants in the field of law, M.C. Setalvad and M.C. Chagla both of whom I knew well gave an account of their distinguished lives. President R. Venkatraman's autobiography is an enduring document of contemporary Indian history. The title of Prime Minister Callaghan's autobiography tells us the essence of all autobiographies. The title Lord Callahan chose for his autobiography was 'Time and Chance' which he introduced with an apt quotation from the Bible."

Dr. Alexander's encounters and experiences in the constant tumult and turbulence in the complex corridors of power is more of an engaging eyewitness account but the witness is not only an acute and astute observer of the scene but is also a participant, the line of demarcation being very subtle and thin. Conscious of that line of demarcation, Dr. Alexander gives us a travelogue, which is engaging, clinical and candid. It is the narrative of an insider, who refrains from egoistic embroil and avoids opportunistic or self-serving adaptation.

The first chapter contains a systematic and blow-by-blow account of how Dr. Alexander missed the presidential office by a whisker. Its justification is that the episode also belongs to the latter-day provenance of corridors of power. He has captioned the chapter from Raj Bhawan to Rajya Sabha. Having been close to Smt. Indira Gandhi, he took the Congress Party's Opposition to his candidature with anguish and somewhat bitterly. Knowing as I do the mercurial nature of the politics of higher echelons and having myself encountered and experienced many a proverbial slip between the cup and the lip, I would only pause and pass on to the pulsating heart of the book, which is in the narrative of Indira Years, when Dr. Alexander saw it all from the grandstand vantage point. In that narrative, Indiraji comes through as a strong no nonsense individual who had a mind of her own, who listened to others but would brook no opposition. Dr. Alexander is to be found by her side as an example par excellence of a trusted loyal civil servant political

adviser and friend of Indiraji. This book shows Dr. Alexander as the redoubtable defender of the faith. Dr. Alexander quotes my distinguished friend the late K.B. Lal to describe Indiraji's personality traits vividly, said K.B. Lal.

Indiraji, whom I had the privilege to know intimately during an earlier period reposed total confidence in her friends, colleagues and civil servants and commanded their complete loyalty. It was during her term of office that the Prime Minister came to be much more than *primus inter pares*. The PMO came to be keystone of the arch of prime ministerial form of government. Pandit Nehru was no doubt the prominent and powerful prime minister but he was tempered by, and often deferred to colleagues of great political stature such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and others. Moreover, during his term as Prime Minister he had to work with a gently powerful and firmly independent president of the calibre of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Institutional and personal constraints on the power and authority of Smt. Indira Gandhi were rare. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had the mandate of the people as a whole. Indeed, she became, as it were a candidate in every constituency. Consequently and correspondingly, the PMO became overall. Institutionally, PMO was the kingpin of the machinery and operational framework of the prime ministerial form of parliamentary government, a kind of an inner wheel of the larger wheel of governance. As late Rajiv Gandhi said about Dr. Alexander, "he (Alexander) The PMO reinforces the primacy of the Prime Minister's Office, optimizes coordination and reins in unruly horses." The office of PMO is in effect a political office behind the facade of a civil service structure. Even otherwise, at that level the line of demarcation between politics and public administration is in actuality non-existence. Dr. Alexander discharged the duties of that complex office with admirable loyalty, detachment, objectivity and skill.

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Vedas and Upanishads

For several centuries running into many millennia, India has been a veritable cradle and a truly hospitable home of different schools of thought and religious traditions. Throughout those trackless centuries India has provided an ample expanse of friendly space for an open and ongoing discourse of ideas marked by a quintessential spirit of inquiry and a sense of freedom, enlarging and reinforcing its multicultural vision, upholding values of affirmative tolerance and consistently seeking and evolving a sense of unity in diversity.

The Vedic hymns and the discourses and dialogues in the Upanishads as well as the teachings of the Jain and Buddhist traditions bear eloquent testimony to a remarkable continuity of an exceptionally free discourse of ideas. In that discourse within the orbit of ancient Indic heritage, there were manifold diversities but there was always an overarching as well as a subterranean sense of unity and coherence which gave the Indic civilization some of its defining characteristics and Indic culture its spiritual logos and its humanitarian and ecological ethos. It is that logos and that ethos which are coherently and consistently reflected in the Indic approach to environment. That approach is a part of the living legacy of India even today, although that legacy often seems to be embattled and imperilled all around. At the same time, we know that the ancient Indian legacy is endowed with an uncanny and time-tested resilience. In the resilience of that legacy, there is hope and promise for India and the rest of the world.

The Vedas enshrine a holistic and poetic cosmic vision. They represent the oldest, the most carefully nurtured, the most elaborately systematized and the most lovingly preserved oral tradition in the annals of the world. Unique in their perspective of time and space, the Vedas have a universal

and timeless quality. The evocative poetry of joyous and spontaneous affirmation of life and nature, the unravelling exploration of the seers into the terrestrial and transcendental destiny of mankind, the pervasive immanence and the pristine omnipresence of primeval reality and primordial matter, and the wisdom and philosophy of moral and social order in an harmonious equilibrium unfold the luminous realm of the spirit of the Vedas.

Unfortunately, the Western Vedic scholarship of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century which introduced the Vedic literature to the Western world, though erudite and even original, missed the depth and meaning of Vedic symbolism mainly because the western discovery of the Vedic lore and literature came in an age when unrepentant colonialism and self-opinionated missionary activity were in the ascendant and the traditional repositories and exponents of the Vedic heritage in their own Indian homeland were in a state of intellectual decline and social disarray. During that period there was little awareness in the West of the many-splendoured Indic achievements in philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, chemistry, biology, botany, physics, metaphysics, arts, aesthetics, and state craft. In fact, there was a certain insidious lack of respect for the culture of the conquered country.

As I have endeavoured to explain in my Foreword to the recently published text and translation of the Vedas in twenty-four volumes, the Vedic vision was somewhat eclipsed for many centuries by an ethnic amnesia and by India's long and forced isolation and subjugation. There was an overpowering sense in the devastation of our Indic identity and dignity and a denuding loss of self-respect and self-confidence. In that state of decay and disillusionment and of penury and paralysis of critical Indian scholarship, Swami Dayanand Saraswati's self-confident interpretation of the Vedas came as a breath of fresh air, creating a new ambience for understanding, a new striving of resurgence and a new equation of independence. Swami Dayanand naturally saw the Vedas as an Indian, steeped in that tradition, as a living and universal scripture of mankind containing "a plenary revelation of religious, ethical and scientific truth". Sri Aurobindo's poetic, philosophical, mystical and spiritual approach to Vedas represents the flowering of that renaissance. Western translators and commentators whose contribution of Vedic learning is, in a historical sense, monumental and memorable, however, lacked that temperamental empathy to enable them to identify themselves with Vedic culture which enabled Swami Dayanand and Sri Aurobindo to give an integrated interpretation of the social ethos, religious spirit and spiritual values of the Vedas. As Sri Aurobindo put it in a fair and objective appraisal:

"It was the curiosity of a foreign culture that broke after many centuries

the seal of final authoritativeness which Sayana had fixed on the ritualistic interpretation of the Veda. The ancient scripture was delivered over to a scholarship laborious, bold in speculation, ingenious in its flights of fancy, conscientious according to its own lights, but ill-fitted to understand the method of the old mystic poets; for it was void of any sympathy with that ancient temperament, unprovided with any clue in its own intellectual or spiritual environment to the ideas hidden in the Vedic figures and parables.

It is true that there remain many unanswered questions in Vedic scholarship. What we do know in our limited understanding of the Vedas is, perhaps, merely a fraction of the totality of the Vedic universe of ideas, values, institutions, culture and language. What is however no longer unclear is that the subtle, sophisticated philosophical efflorescence of Upanishads and of Jain and Buddhist philosophies were intimately intertwined with the Vedic roots obviously as shown by Sri Aurobindo. The anterior Vedic culture had a rich ambience of idea, perception, experience and attainment with a vision and a world-view, which had the divine logos and the humanitarian and ecological ethos at its heart.

“Such profound and ultimate thought, such systems of subtle and elaborate psychology as are found in the substance of the Upanishad, could not spring out of a previous void. It is axiomatic that the human mind in its progress marches from knowledge to knowledge, or it renews and enlarges previous knowledge that has been obscured and overlaid, or it seizes on old imperfect clause and I led by them to new discoveries. Demonstrably, the thought of the Upanishad followed great origins anterior to itself.

In the Indic tradition, it has always been thought that to commune with the Vedas is to share in cosmic vision and a universal faith. There is a permeating and pervasive awareness and acknowledgement of that Vedic and Upanishadic ‘anterior’ throughout the history of Indian thought. Its radiant richness was, however, lost on those who either saw the Vedas only as pristine pastoral poetry or as a source book of ritual incantation of elemental gods, or of unlettered and primitive Pantheistic Animism.

Vedic cosmology and cosmogony and the Vedic pantheon are deeply symbolic. According to Sri Aurobindo, the pioneer scholar, philosopher and visionary, who illumined the path of subtle, symbolic and spiritual interpretation of the Vedas, the Vedic seers “arranged the substance of their thought in a system of parallelism by which the same deities were at once internal and external powers of universal nature, and they managed its expression through a system of double values by which the same language served for their worship in both aspects.” The physical universe and the attributes of the external

powers of universal nature thus provided the metaphor for mapping the deeper ineffable psychological and spiritual universe of inner consciousness. Since the Vedas were primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture, says Sri Aurobindo, the psychological sense of Vedas was particularly predominant, pervasive, close-knit and coherent.

The central idea of the Vedic religion is the idea of the One Being with gods or the devas expressing the many facets of that Unity in numerous forms and names. The colourful diversities of Hindu polytheism and pantheism are thus resolved and reconciled through the supervening philosophy and doctrine of Vedic and Upanishadic monotheism.

There is a cosmic celebration of the divine genesis of the creation in the Vedas which has an anthropomorphic symbolism. Vedic hymns ascribe the birth of the universe to the One Being; the birth of Moon to the Mind; of the Sun to the eyes; of Indra and agni to the mouth; of Air the breath; of firmament to the Navel; of Heaven to the Head; of Earth to the Feet; and to Space to the Ear. In mundakopanishad, the same thought is expressed as follows: Fire is his head, his eyes are the moon and the sun; the regions of space are his ears, his voice the revealed Veda; the wind is his breath, his heart is the entire universe; the earth is his footstool; truly, he is the inner soul of all. We find in these and other hymns and passages of creative cosmic monotheism an imaginative functional polytheism so that the physical universe is perceived as a cluster of faculties of the divine One Being.

The Vedic seers speak to certain cosmic divisions, which refer on the one hand to the physical and objective universe and on the other to the inner space of subjective consciousness. The heartthrob of the inner space is a unique Vedic discovery called the soul, which soars beyond physical and mental consciousness, and climbs beyond the earth of body and the heaven of mind by the ascending path of the truth to find the Godhead seated in the triple Divine Principle and the source of Beatitude waiting for it, leaning down to it, reaching out to it. The soul finds in the manifestations of the One Being 'the Friend and Lover', 'the Pastoral Master of the Herds', and 'the source and outpurer of the ambrosial wine of divine delight' drawn from 'the sevenfold waters of existence or pressed out from the luminous plant on the hill of being and uplifted by it raptures'.

In the inner space of subjective consciousness, the indwelling Vedic gods represent spiritual capacities and potentialities. For instance, and to give first one example the flaming godhead, Agni or Fire, represents the Divine will perfectly inspired by Divine Wisdom which awakens the consciousness to Immortality. It symbolizes the potency of the Truth-

consciousness and becomes the Divine Will-Force, portrayed as 'flaming upwards to heaven to meet the Divine Dawn' and reaching the paradise of light and bliss, which is its own native home and where the shining immortals sit in celestial sessions and drink the wine of the infinite beatitude. Agni is portrayed symbolically as a child of the universal parents, Heaven and Earth, Mind and Body, Soul and Material Nature, also described as a child of the seven Mothers or the seven principles, which constitute conscious existence. In these images, there are innumerable parable which envelop many myths. It is, however, clear that Agni is not merely Sacrificial Fire, not simply a material flame or physical heat and light.

The symbolism of Fire, Light and Dawn in the same way as the symbolism of different gods of the Vedic pantheon including Surya, Savitri, Varuna, Mitra and many others, represents and reflects the large cosmic truth of concordance between inner and outer space and a bridge between spiritual and the ecological. That larger cosmic truth is encapsulated in a triple term epigram 'Satyam Rtam Brhat', which tells us of the Truth of the cosmos embedded in the absolute order of harmony. In the Prithvi Sukta (in Atharva Veda) the axiom is 'Satyam Brhat Rtam Ugrain', which particularly stresses the exacting nature of the discipline of truth, harmony and rectitude. It is this principle of harmony which is the 'truth of things' and which sustain the universe in a state of equipoise, facilitates the transition of the human soul from the state of death to a state of immortality, maintains the conjunction of planets and the combination of elements and prescribes the fundamental principles of social ethics and ecological balance.

The Vedic Hymn to the Earth, the Prithvi Sukta in Atharva Veda is unquestionably the oldest and the most sublime and evocative environmental invocation in the history of the world. In it, the Vedic seer solemnly declares to Mother Earth: 'Mata Bhumi Putrohan Prithivya': Earth is my mother, I am her son. Mother Earth I celebrate for all her natural bounties and her gifts of herbs and vegetation. Her blessings are sought in all endeavours and aspirations. A covenant is made that the humankind shall secure the Earth against all environmental trespasses and shall never let her be oppressed (Asambadhan) Madhyato Manavanam.

A soul stirring prayer is sung in one of the hymns for the preservation and conservation of hills, snow-clad mountain and all brown, black and red earth, unsmitten, unwounded, unbroken and well defended by India.

Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,
in which food and cornfields have come to be,
in which lives all that breathes and that moves,

May she confer on us the finest of her yield.
Earth, in which the waters, common to all,
moving on all sides, flow unfailingly, day and night,
may she pour on us milk in many streams,
and endow us with luster.
May those born of thee, O Earth,
Be for our welfare, free from sickness and waste,
Wakeful through a long life, we shall become
Bearer of tribute to thee.

Earth, my mother, set me securely with bliss
In full accord with heaven,
O wise one,
Uphold me in grace and splendour
Say the hymn to the Earth in Prayerful thanks giving and homage which
is eternally inspiring and edifying. Earth in which lie the sea.
The Vedic seers regarded the Earth a 'saved space' for the consecrated
endeavours and aspiration of humankind and for the practice of restraint
and responsibility.



Sufism in India

In the religious history of medieval India, Islam has made a major contribution. Just a few years after the foundation of Islam, its doctrines were brought to India through the medium of Arab traders. Indian Buddhists and Shaivas had considerably influenced the people of Persia and Arabia. There is evidence of this influence in the tenets of Islam. In spite of this, it has a uniqueness of its own. The people of India, therefore, welcomed this new faith and even before the foundation of Muslim dominion in India endowed mosques for the convenience of Muslim preachers. The 'Quran' at one place rejects the efficacy of force in securing converts. The people of India thus were then unfamiliar with that aspect of Islam, which showed itself after the foundation of Muslim rule in India.

A number of Muslim saints and preachers came to India in the wake of the Arab conquest of Sindh. However, they did not have much influence on the local people. After the annexation of the Punjab to the Ghazanavi Empire, the number of such saints coming to India considerably increased and they settled down at different places in northern India. After the establishment of Turkish government in India, these saints started receiving state patronage and many Hindus changed their religion in order to avoid the taxes, i.e. *jeziyah*. Despite this there were many people, who felt sincerely attracted towards certain Muslim saints (like Sheikh Moinuddin Chishti) and sought initiation from them.

Sufis: The Sufis form the liberal element in Islam and it is by their efforts that Islam has acquired some respect in India. There were many orders of the Sufis which slightly differ from one another in certain matters. However, there is a lot of common ground. The term 'Sufi' is generally used for that class of Muslim saints which clad itself in simple woolen garments with a

view to live the life of poverty and humility and which instead of accepting the literal external meaning of the 'Quran' lays greater emphasis on its underlying mysteries. Instead of depriving God of form and attributes, they impute to him the qualities of effulgence, love, mercy, generosity and immanence. Instead of inculcating fear or the wrath of God, they put forward the ideal of securing union with Him by pursuing the path of perfect love. (Akin to the philosophy of the Bhakti saints in Hinduism). The most outstanding attribute of God, according to the sufis, is his effulgence and they dwell upon his luster, glory and splendor in various ways. They feel that it is His glory that is reflected in every object, every little particle, in the universe. That is why they recommend love and kindness to all created beings. As a corollary of this, many Sufis were strict vegetarians. Regarding lust as the most serious obstacle in the path of devotions to God they practiced a number of yogic exercises as a means of suppressing it. Removing the sheathe of ignorance and impurity encrusting the heart, they contemplate on God with a feeling of utter sincerity and purity. They recognize the value of repetition of God's name and sometimes resort to music of a loving devotional character as an aid to concentration. The fervour of music often led to heightening of emotion which ended in ecstatic dancing. This is very much similar to the practices of Bhakti saints like Meerabai and Surdas. In any case, orthodox Islam prohibits the use of music. While admitting the doctrines of immanence, they do not support idol worship. Their goal is union with God. The ritual of Islam, therefore, does not fascinate them. Some among them went to the length of saying that faith in the prophethood of Mohammed could in no way help in the spiritual progress and therefore, they regarded only the first half of the 'Kalima' ('La ilaha illaLLa -- there is no God except Allah) as relevant to their purpose. In each of these orders, the preceptor or the Pir has a great importance because it is only under his guidance that spiritual progress is possible. The 'pir', therefore, receives in practice more reverence and honour than Allah. The more celebrated Muslim (Sufi) saints were Sheikh Moinuddin Chisti, Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Nizamuddin Auliya, Malik Mohammed Jayasi, and Mohammed Ghani Gwaliori. As a result of their influence, Yoga and mysticism entered the fold of Islam while the importation of sentiment of love for divine helped to reduce its austere rigidity.

The orthodox 'ulema' while recognizing the services of the sufis in the spread of Islam regarded them as unorthodox in certain respects and therefore subjected them at times to considerable persecution. They incurred the wrath of the bigoted element because of their addiction to music and dancing, support of celibacy, faith in the immanence of God and neglect of

'namaz', 'roza' and 'hajj'. However, because most of them were men of sterling character they commanded high respect among the Muslims and the king and commoner alike looked upon it as a great privilege to be able to render them some service.

Bhakti Saints, Kabir and Nanak: The religious reformers like Chaitanya, Madhva, Ramanuja, etc., were all well-versed in the Hindu shastra. They recognized the need of reform in the then prevailing social order, but they did not take the revolutionary step of scrapping the existing social system altogether and replacing it by a very new order. They were reformers and not revolutionaries. However, there were some medieval saints, who wanted to revolutionize the existing social order and social value's root and branch. Among the saints of this group, Kabir has attracted the greatest notice.

Nothing is definitely known about the parentage of Kabir. Tradition holds that he was born of a Brahmin widow, who had abandoned the child to hide her shame. Niru, a local weaver, noticed the newborn baby and as he had no children of his own both he and her wife gladly adopted him as their own son. This very Brahmin child, brought up by a Muslim, later became a zealous advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity on the social and metaphysical planes. An analytical examination of the views of mode of preaching adopted by Kabir suggests that he had borrowed from many sources. Kabir is taken to be a saint of the 'Nirguna Pantha'. (Meerabai and Surdas belong to the 'Saguna Pantha') that he was indebted to the Hindu for his view and 'Brahma' and 'Maya' is amply proved by the utterances attributed to him. He was indebted to the Sufi also from whom he learnt much of mysticism. From the teachings of his guru Ramananda, he incorporated the elements of non-violence, morality, 'bhakti'. His utterances have been grouped together and called the 'Bijak'.

The Supreme reality, according to Kabir, is one although it has been called by different names such as 'Sahab', 'Allah', 'Khuda', 'Rama', 'Rahim' or 'Brahma'. Wisdom consists in getting at the basic unity underlying the multiplicity of names. The ultimate reality is formless and yet the master of this universe. His consort 'maya' has distracted everybody. A loving devotion to Him will bring deliverance from 'maya' by His grace. Thus, by the fusion of the formless with the form a basis for 'Bhakti' has been devised. The 'Bhakti' or devotion should be emotional and unalloyed. The repetition of this name need not be done with the help of an objective rosary but it should be an internal and intermittent affair. The search for the Divine should be conducted not outside but inside one's own self. Consequently, worshipping a stone idol or shouting in the mosque is meaningless. Ritualism, pilgrimage to holy places and 'hajj' are all useless. What is needed is the purity of emotion,

fear of the Lord, moral conduct and an attitude of paternal affection for all and not insolence and bloodshed in the name of religion. In the search for the Divine within oneself, he has recognized the value of exercises prescribed by 'hathyoga'. He rejects the spiritual significance of dance and music as practiced by the sufis (and contrary to the Saguna Panthas) and recommends instead listening to the 'nad' or music within. He has thus tried to bring out the fundamental unity of Islam and Hinduism. He dubs the Brahmins and the Mullahs as ignorant, credulous, vain and misguided and exhorts them to accept the truth. Kabir attaches no importance to caste. Nor does he attach any merit to scriptural learning. A number of people felt strongly drawn towards him so that many Hindus and Mussalmans became his followers. His views have influenced later generations as well.

Just like Kabir, Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, also preached devotion of God without attributes (Nirguna) and he initiated into his faith people of all castes of creeds without any distinction whatsoever of Hindu and Mussalman or high and low. Though Nanak also uses Persian and Arabic expressions, it is the Hindu shastras, that form the basis of his doctrines and he refers to the current social evils in a far milder language. His temper is characterized by humility and not by vanity. That is why his views have found equal acceptance at the hands of the higher castes as well. The religion founded by Nanak checked conversion of the Punjab Hindus to the Muslim faith and later it led to the foundation of a strong and virile community, which has won for itself a place of pride in the national history of India.

The reformers mentioned above are only a representative character. Besides them numerous other saints and reformers also flourished during this period in different parts of the land. However, they too generally acted on similar lines. Jnaneshwar, Eknath, Namdev, Tukaram and other saints of the South rejected the barriers of caste and creed and preached the doctrine of 'Bhakti' to all and sundry. The people of Rajputana and Gujarat were greatly influenced by Mirabai.

According to a Legend & when Nanak and Kabir died their bodies turned into flowers -- to avoid clash over burial or cremation that would have taken place amongst their Hindu and Muslim followers.

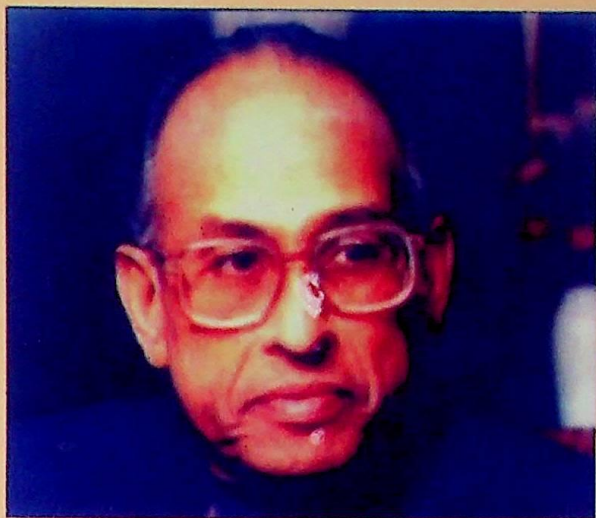
Influence of Islam and Hinduism on each Other: As Hinduism and Islam lived in India together, it was natural that they should influence each other. Among the Hindu the caste rules became more vigorous in the beginning while in the later stages the institution of caste itself became suspect in the eyes of many a Hindu. Its rigidity, therefore, considerably wore off. Popular faith in idol worship remained unshaken but certain sections gave it up

altogether. New arguments had, therefore, to be devised in its favour. It was said that the 'archa' (worshipped) form of God is the idol. The glory and effulgence of God is evoked in the idol as a result of its worship by devotees. However, if an unworthy person entered the temple, the divine glory forsook the idol temporarily or even for all time. Thus, the idols destroyed and desecrated by the Muslims were mere pieces of stone or metal because with the entry of the 'mlechchha' into the temple the divine effulgence left the idol for good. Idol worship had never been obligatory for all Hindus. It was merely the first step to devotion to God. He who gets stuck there permanently will fully check his own progress. Thus idol worship now lost some of its former popularity. The lower classes among the Hindus were now treated better and the path of salvation or entry into heaven was thrown open to them. Excessive popularity of 'bhakti' during this period (14th and 15th centuries) might also be the indirect outcome of the entry of Islam into India, although the basic elements of 'bhakti' had been present in the land since centuries, before the birth of Islam. Krishnaite Vaishnavisms as taught by Chaitanya and Vallabha might have been partially influenced by the emotional aspect of Sufism, although its main source is undoubtedly the 'Bhagwata Purana'.

The Muslims likewise have been influenced by the Hindu doctrine of 'Karma', predetermination and monism. The mosques and the tombs acquired greater sanctity in India because of the indirect influence of Hinduism. Hindu social customs also affected the Muslims, widow-remarriage and divorce, began to be frowned upon even among them. Liberal elements in both the communities helped to bring them closer and mutual hatred and bitterness was considerably blunted. However, the evil deeds of fanatical Muslims and persecuting monarchs occasionally upset the effort at reconciliation. Overall, we may say, sincere goodwill and amity never existed between the two communities in general. However, there were numerous Hindu and Muslim families, which on the individual plane came very close together as fraternal neighbours.

It is a known fact that wherever a Muslim invited a Hindu to his house for a meal, the Muslim host recruited the services of a Hindu cook to prepare and serve the meal to his Hindu guest.

□□□



Dr. L.M. Singhvi

(9 Nov., 1931 – 6 Oct., 2007)

A world citizen, a scholar-statesman, a prolific author, poet, linguist and litterateur, an eminent jurist, a doyen of the Indian Bar, UN Special Rapporteur and a world authority on Judicial Independence, a distinguished diplomat and a prominent parliamentarian, Dr. Singhvi was a votary and an exponent of the heritage of India, a world leader in the movement for Culture of Peace, interfaith tolerance and amity, and Human Rights.

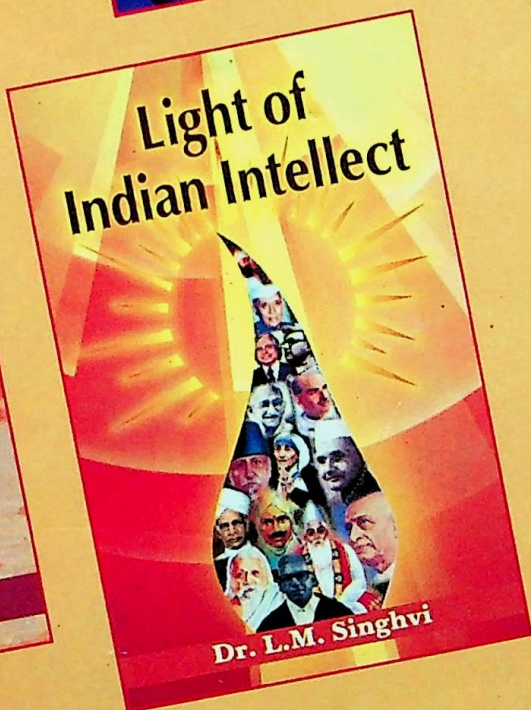
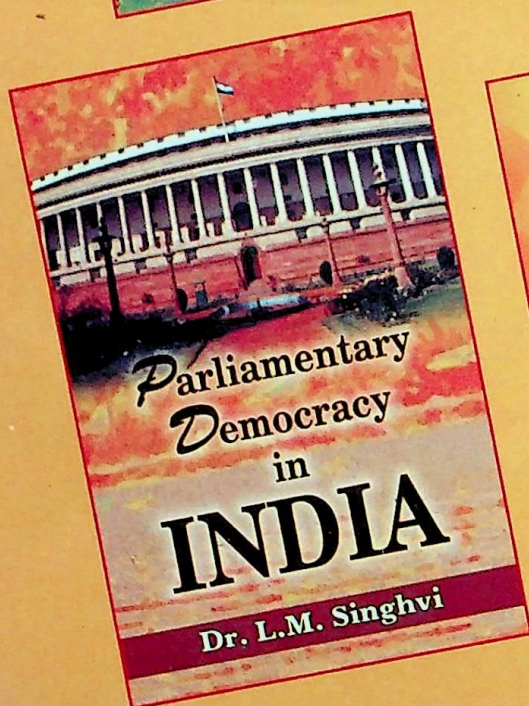
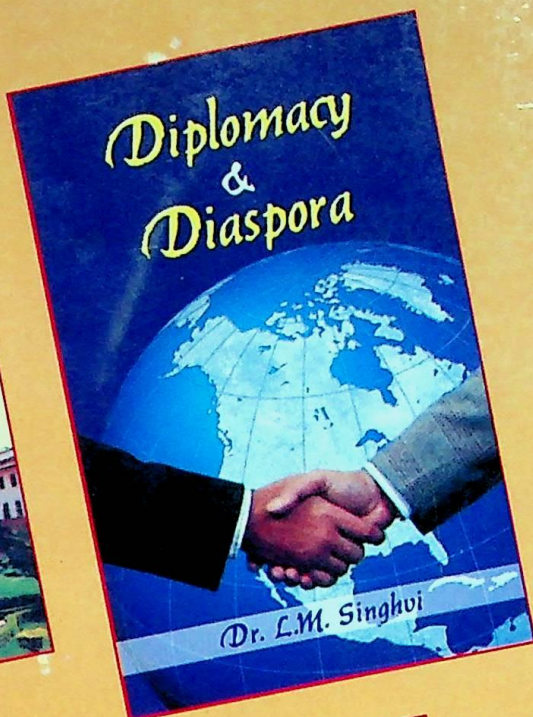
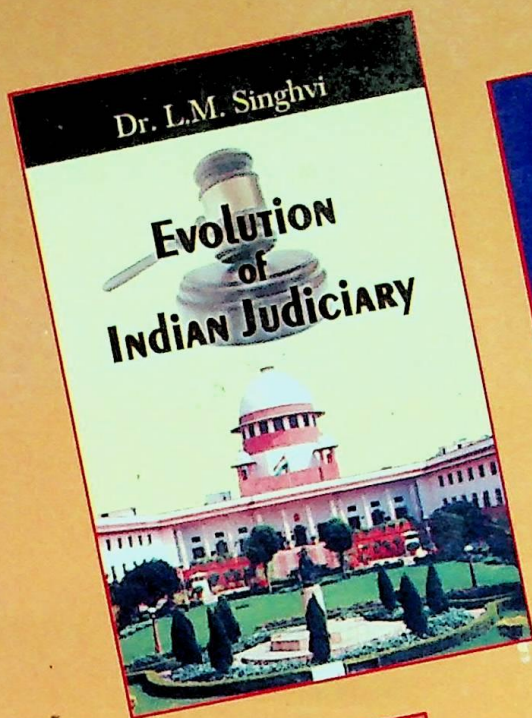
He received the highest acclaim in the form of degrees of LL.D. and D. Litt. *Honoris Causa* from leading universities in India and abroad. He was made an Honorary Bencher and Master of the Middle Temple in 1987. He had the rare distinction of being appointed to the ancient Rede Chair which was established in 1524 in Cambridge University.

Dr. Singhvi was elected to Lok Sabha in 1962 and to Rajya Sabha in 1998.

Dr. Singhvi was elected a President of the Centennial Parliament of World's Religions held in Chicago in 1993. He led the Indian delegations to the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 and the UNESCO Conference on Culture of Peace in Stockholm in 1998. Dr. Singhvi was elected to the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague in 2000.

Dr. Singhvi was High Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom for seven years with the rank of cabinet minister. Awarded *Padma Bhushan* in 1998. Dr. Singhvi was Life Trustee and President of various social, cultural and literary organisations of repute. He authored several monographs and books in English and Hindi.

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